

Imran's plea accepted
ISLAMABAD (PPI): A district and sessions court on Saturday approved a plea filed by the PTI chief through his lawyer seeking exemption from appearance in the Toshakhana case. Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar resumed hearing of the case filed by the (ECP seeking criminal proceedings against the former prime minister for not disclosing the gifts retained from the state depository.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

JUI calls for protests today
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Ameer Maulana Fazlur Rehman has given a call for protest across the country on Sunday against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden. In a message issued on Saturday, the JUI chief claimed that the biggest protest rally will be staged in Karachi. He said that he will personally attend the Karachi protest gathering.

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX No. 184 Regd. No. 241 MUHARRAM-UL-HARRAM 04 1445 -- SUNDAY, JULY 23 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

PM wants people to espy performance of PML-N, PTI govts

F.P. Report

SHARQPUR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday urged the people to consider the facts involving pathetic and poor performance of corruption tainted government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf with that of Pakistan Muslim League-N which had always been the pioneer of mega development projects.

He said they would accept public mandate in the upcoming general elections and if the PML-N under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif got another opportunity to serve the country, they would restore the real image of Pakistan.

The prime minister was addressing a ceremony after stone laying of different significant development projects which included 19Kms long Lahore bypass linking Kala Shah Kaku with Lahore-Karachi Motorway at a cost of Rs35 billion. The project will create about 27,000 jobs opportunities.

The prime minister also broke ground for expansion of Lahore-Karachi Motorway Saggian road and main Ravi bridge which would ease vehicular traffic, help save fuel and create jobs opportunities. Later, he also laid foundation stones of Esaan (Sharqpur) interchange at Abdul Hakeem Motorway and the establishment of Qaid Azam University campus and soft launch of construction of a scout college.

Declaring former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as 'a builder of Pakistan, man behind ending loadshedding, launching of multi dollars China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and a builder of a vast network of roads and putting the country on path of rapid progress, he said Nawaz Sharif aspired to transform the country into 'an Asian tiger'.

Unfortunately, his rule was ended in 2018 through a huge conspiracy hatched against Pakistan, the prime minister regretted. If the PML-N was in the government during the four years of PTI's rule, the country would have a different destiny, he added.

During the years 2013 to 2018, under Nawaz Sharif's rule the country was making progress by leaps and bounds, but afterwards in the PTI's government, the country was pushed into chaos. The prime minister said with a change in the regime, all the opposition leadership was sent to jails

on basis of fake cases, false allegations of thefts and corruption were levelled, even sisters and daughters were sent behind bars during the PTI's rule.

"The development pace spurred by PML-N government was halted," he regretted. The prime minister also questioned Imran Niazi's claims of returning back 300 billion dollars stashed outside Pakistan within ninety days and said the PTI's government did not get any single penny during the four years of its rule. Referring to Rs50 billion amount recovery scandal, he said, the UK National Crime Agency (NCA) had investigated the issue and after out of court settlement with the other party, decided to return the amount to the government exchequer but it did not go to State Bank of Pakistan rather went to the Supreme Court where Niazi's government became a party.

A closed envelop was presented before the cabinet in this regard without showing or discussing it with the members and approval was accorded, he added. "It was a huge crime as to how the national exchequer was plundered," he said, adding the BRT Peshawar, Toshakhana, Malam Jabba, sugar scams etc were the other major corruption cases of PTI.

The prime minister said the UK crime agency had also carried out investigation against him for two years over false allegations and at the request of PTI's government but later, gave him clean chit. Citing difficulties regarding the IMF's agreement, the prime minister said China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates stood with Pakistan like rocks.

He said that he could not sleep due to fears of Pakistan being at the verge of default, but with the grace of Allah Almighty, Pakistan was now, on its right direction. The ceremony was attended by ministers, parliamentarians, relevant authorities and a large number of people. The prime minister said that under his Youth's programmes about Rs80 billion were set aside and exclaimed that if the government had more resources, he would not hesitate to allocate them for the country's youth.

He said under the laptops scheme, the students were given the gadgets due to their hard work. Due due to this facility, a huge number of youth had been earning livelihood and getting education while sitting at homes,

he added. The prime minister declared that if the PML-N got another opportunity to serve the country, they would spread a network of laptops. He further said that price hike had burdened the poor people, but these difficulties could be overcome with collective hard work, dedication and sincerity.

The prime minister also underlined the priorities of his government including agriculture development, information technology, exploration of minerals etc to achieve progress. He reiterated that life could no longer be led on foreign loans and stressed that the country people have to decide whether to live with respect or on begging. Referring to the soft launch of uplift projects in the area, he expressed the confidence that it would uplift facade of the area and ease traffic vehicular traffic, besides boosting trade activities.

Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mahmood, in his remarks, said that the coalition government was continuously working for the uplift of the country. They had formed government through a constitutional struggle and strove to save it from default, restored development projects and completed them within 14 months of its rule, adding they also took Pakistan out of FATF's grey list.

The minister said the motorway network launched by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif would soon turn Pakistan into hub of regional and global economic and trade activities. The coalition government had restored confidence of the foreign investors under the dynamic leadership of the prime minister, he added.

He regretted that trust of the friendly nations was damaged during the previous government's rule. Maulana Asad said that they assured the nation to put an end to the 'engineered governments and elections' forever. Minister for Federal Education and Training Rana Tanveer Hussain, on the occasion, said that 90 percent public projects were completed by the PML-N governments. The just inaugurated projects were dreams of the area which had now turned into reality and would change fate of the people, he added. He observed that it was due to the leadership of the prime minister that steered Pakistan out of the difficulties and put it on the path of progress and prosperity which was carved out by the previous PML-N governments.



SHARQPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif unveiling a plaque during the groundbreaking of extension of PKM start point to Saggian Road and Main Ravi Bridge.

Greek boat tragedy: Four more bodies reached

LAHORE (INP): The dead bodies of four more Pakistanis who died in the Greek boat tragedy were brought to Lahore on Saturday. The bodies were transferred to Lahore from Doha via a foreign flight.

The representatives of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation received the bodies and handed them over to the heirs. The dead bodies of Arsalan and Abu Bakr were sent to their native town, Nowshera Warkan. While the bodies of Adnan and Ali Ijaz were dispatched to Gujrat and Mandi Bahauddin, respectively.

Before this, three dead bodies reached the Lahore Airport on Thursday night. More than 300 Pakistani nationals were killed in the capsizing of an overcrowded fishing trawler off the coast of Greece last month. They wanted to enter Europe illegally. About 750 men, women and children were on the packed boat when it capsized last month, the United Nations Migration Agency (IOM) said, killing hundreds and making the tragedy one of the worst in the Mediterranean Sea, according to the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson. Every year, tens of thousands of migrants fleeing war, persecution, climate change, and poverty risk treacherous routes to Europe.

DIG found dead at residence

LAHORE (PPI): DIG Police Shariq Jamal was found dead at a flat during the wee hours of Saturday night. The incident has prompted police to start investigation into the matter to ascertain facts behind the death.

According to police, the body of DIG Shariq Jamal Khan was found from a private flat 104/A and was shifted to National hospital, however later it was moved to Jinnah Hospital for post-mortem examination. Moreover, efforts are being made by police to find out the details of his death.

Reportedly, the deceased Deputy Inspector General (DIG) resides in phase-4, the area falls under the jurisdiction of Defence-A police station. Whereas the flat comes under the jurisdiction of Nishtar police station. As soon as the news of Shariq Jamal's death surfaced, the police officers and Shariq Jamal's wife reached the hospital.

A case regarding the incident has been registered on the complaint of deceased DIG's wife. Police claims to arrest a man and a woman for investigation in this regard. The DIG was currently serving as Officer on Special Duty (OSD), he has also served as DIG traffic and DIG railways. The deceased recently returned home after passing departmental course for promotion in Grade-21.

During PTI's era, media faced gag

Marriyum says effort made to impose black law to curb its freedom

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Saturday restrictions were imposed on the media due to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) order, during the PTI's era, they tried to bring the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority black law, which was opposed by all political parties and media organizations.

"PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023 is the bill not of the government, this is a bill of Pakistan, the people of Pakistan, the media and journalists, in which the rights of journalists are protected. It includes the representation of journalistic organizations, and they are empowered to make decisions", the minister said while addressing a press conference here.

She said that there were 140 channels licensed by PEMRA in Pakistan, among them 35 were news and current affairs channels, 52 entertainment channels, 25 regional channels, 6 non-commercial and education channels, 5 sports channels, 7 health and agro channels, and 10 education commercial channels. The minister said that PEMRA Ordinance was promulgated in 2002 and now in 2023, the media landscape had changed and it become so diverse. "We are all going through a new era of social media where new platforms have been introduced to express opinions, all these channels are present on cyberspace and social media", she added.

Marriyum said that during the last four years of PTI, there was censorship on the media and the former Prime Minister Imran Khan got the title of "media predator", adding the title was not given to him by his political rivals or any organization of Pakistan, but by international journalistic organizations keeping in view the freedom of expression in Pakistan. At that time, the programs running at that time were stopped, journalists and news channels were banned, she added.

She said that in the past, firing was done on journalists, they were kidnapped and tortured, their programs were stopped and they were sent to jails. Citing the example of Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman, she said that he was

arrested in a case in which everyone had now been acquitted. By sending him to jail in the NAB case, Imran Khan gave a message that if he could go to jail, then other media house owners and journalists could also be prosecuted, she opined.

The minister said during PTI's tenure, the then information minister used to slap journalists, he used to threaten journalists and media organizations to support the draconian PMDA law. Marriyum said that last year, when she was appointed Minister of Information, she held first meeting with the Joint Action Committee on 23rd April 2022.

Representatives of PBA, APNS, CPNE, AMEND and PFUJ were included in the joint action committee. The minister said that the laws regarding the rights of journalists, ethical media, media responsibilities and fake news within the regulatory bodies in many countries of the world were reviewed. She said she was thankful to all these organizations that assisted her in preparing the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023.

She said they guided her how to take steps to protect the rights of media workers and establish a responsible media. Marriyum said that the Joint Action Committee held several meetings over the course of 11 months for consultations with all stakeholders on the bill. The minister said that the existing laws regarding the rights of journalists, ethical media, responsibilities of the media and fake news within the regulatory bodies in many countries of the world were reviewed, and PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023 contained international best practices.

She said that for the first time the definition of disinformation and misinformation had been included in the PEMRA law with the support of all media organizations. "We clarified the difference between misinformation and disinformation in the bill", she said. Marriyum said that Implementation Tribal for Newspaper Employees existed for print media, but there was no forum to protect the rights of electronic media employee who were dismissed from jobs on political grounds. She said that all stakeholders joined hands to protect the rights of journalists and media workers.

Sana: People should repose confidence in PML-N

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Federal Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan has said that the people should repose confidence in Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in upcoming general elections to overcome multifaceted crises prevalent in the country.

Addressing a gas inauguration ceremony in Chak No.31-JB Khan Pur near Aminpur Bungalow here on Saturday night, he said that PML-N was the only party which had the ability to drag Pakistan out of crises and put it on road to progress and prosperity.

He said that in 1998, the entire nation was under extreme stress when India had made atomic explosions whereas its minister was intimidated the neighboring country. In this circumstance, the PML-N supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif who was the then Prime Minister of Pakistan despite severe foreign pressure and threats had conducted six atomic explosions in response of five Indian explosions for equalizing the balance of power in the region.

Similarly, in 2013,

Pakistan was facing acute shortage of electricity and the people were experiencing unprecedented load-shedding of 20 hours daily whereas rampant incidents of terrorism had further aggravated the situation and choked the entire economic activities in the country.

He said that the nation had posed confidence in PML-N which under dynamic leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif not only overcome the menace of terrorism and load shedding within four years but also put the country on road to progress and prosperity. However, unfortunately, in 2018 the democratically elected government of PML-N was removed under a calculated move by disqualifying Mian Nawaz Sharif on flimsy allegation of 'not receiving salary from his own son', he added.

The minister said that Imran Khan was clamped on the nation and this experiment failed bitterly as this man could not launch any worth-mentioning development project despite enjoying powers for five years. He added that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman was an incompetent person as he

only promoted the culture of hate and hatred during his tenure. He said that ill-conceived policies of Imran Khan's government had pushed the country at verge of bankruptcy. However, the conscious leadership of incumbent government overcame this situation and saved the country from collapse.

Rana Sana Ullah Khan said that Pakistan was still under severe grip of multifaceted crises. Therefore, the people should repose confidence in PML-N in upcoming general elections to drag the country out of these crises. Earlier, the minister also inaugurated the supply of gas to Chak No.31-JB Khan Pur and said that the government was contemplating to sign a gas agreement with Russia and Iran to facilitate the masses with this commodity.

He also assured the area people to resolve their genuine problems and provide them all basic amenities at their doorsteps on top priority basis. Former MPAs Mian Amjad Asif, Zafar Iqbal Nagra, area notables and other people were also present on the occasion.

Four killed, one injured due to heavy rains in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As many as 4 people were killed and one person was injured as a result of heavy rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the report of Provincial Disaster Management Authority said here Saturday.

According to reports so far, 12 houses were partially damaged due to floods and rains across the province, said PDMA reported. Nine houses partially damaged due to flooding in Lower Chitral, PDMA officials said here. The Relief Department, District Administration, PDMA, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense, and related institutions are on alert, a spokesman the Relief Department said when contacted.

A detailed assessment of the damage will be started as soon as the flood waters recede in Lower Chitral, the Spokesman Relief Department said. Sensitive communities in Lower Chitral had already been shifted to safer places, he added. Food items (dry ration) were provided to the affected families, the official said.

Relief materials have been sent to the victims, an official of the PDMA said. The district administration mobilized heavy machinery for the speedy restoration of the roads and the road has been cleared for traffic, the official said. The road has been opened by the district administration of Dir Upper. The two-way rehabilitation of the road is in progress, the Spokesman said. He said PDMA had issued a letter to all the concerned institutions and district administration on July 17 and 19 warning them to take precautionary measures against heavy rains and floods.

Asif vows accountability for Imran's 'facilitators'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a stern and unwavering stand, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has asserted that those who played a pivotal role in facilitating Imran Khan's ascent to power in 2018 will not evade accountability. In an exclusive interview with a private television channel Saturday, the minister addressed the tragic events that unfolded on May 9th, emphasizing the need for justice and accountability.

Minister Asif expressed that the recent appearance of PTI Chairman Imran Khan before the courts marks a continuation of events. "He will also face the law and be subject to punishment according to the law," Asif declared. However, the minister's

call for accountability does not stop at Imran Khan alone. He firmly asserted that individuals who supported and patronized Khan from 2012 to 2018 should also be held responsible for their actions.

The conversation also touched upon the matter of donations received by Shaukat Khanum Hospital, which continued to flow into the accounts of Tehreek-e-Insaf. Minister Asif highlighted that the PTI Chairman might be facing possible arrest in light of several alleged crimes. "When so many crimes have been committed, there should be a just punishment or release, as per the merits of each case. In my opinion, Article Six also applies to them," Asif remarked.

Regarding matters of national security, the minister expressed concerns over Khan's access to sensitive information during his tenure as Prime Minister. "This man was not able to safeguard the state's secrets during his time in office," Asif added, raising further questions about potential ramifications. Looking ahead to the future of the government, Asif speculated on the timeline for its dissolution. "The government is likely to be dissolved a day or two before its term expires," he predicted. The impending dissolution would pave the way for elections, which the minister believes will be decided based on either the new census data or the previous one.

PTI chief granted pre-arrest bail in May 9 cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Saturday granted pre-arrest bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in two cases related to May 9 events – wherein military installations including General Headquarters (GHQ) came under attack.

According to details, the sessions court granted bail to PTI chief in two cases registered against him at the Shehzad Town Police Station. A four-page written order on the pre-arrest bail has been issued in both cases. Additional Sessions Judge Farrukh Farid – in his written judgment – ruled that the prosecution must prove that the accused, Imran Khan, insti-

gated the violence – which erupted after the latter was arrested in 190 million pounds case.

According to the prosecution, the written order added that Khan's video statement was the only evidence while that statement was not related to the incident. There was "nothing" in the statement of PTI chief to incite the public, it said and added that the prosecution also presented several tweets of the former prime minister as evidence.

The judge said pointed out that the provision concerning incitement or conspiracy has been subject to misinterpretation. The written order added that it was necessary to "establish a link" between the act of

incitement and the commission of the offence. It was necessary to prove that the offence was committed as a result of the incitement. "At the time of the crime, PTI chief was under the custody of NAB [National Accountability Bureau (NAB), debunking claims of him orchestrating his illegal arrest," the verdict stated.

"Framing a person in a criminal case in such a manner is absurd and reveals malicious intentions on the part of the police," Judge Farrukh Farid added. The written order stated that the pre-arrest bail was granted against the payment of surety bonds worth Rs5,000.



Rains affected communities in Chitral: Governor for prompt actions to provide necessary assistance

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday expresses deep grief and sorrow over the losses caused by heavy rains and floods in Chitral and surrounding areas and has taken prompt actions to address the situation to provide necessary aid to the affected communities.

The Governor had a telephonic conversation with the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure all possible assistance to the flood and rain-affected people in Chitral and other regions.

The Governor asked for

the immediate measures to restore the ground route to Upper Chitral.

The Governor instructed that no effort should be spared in providing aid to the affected people in Chitral district and other regions, hit by floods and heavy rains. The Governor also contacted the Chairman of the Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, directing to ensure prompt relief operations.

Urgent actions are to be taken to safely relocate local residents, travelers, and tourists to secure locations in Chitral, said Governor Ghulam Ali.

Due to the disruption of the ground link to Upper Chitral, arrangements will be made to ensure the delivery of essential supplies, including food and other necessities, to the affected area, he added.

The business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Karachi, is prepared to extend support to those affected in Chitral and surrounding areas, said Governor Ghulam Ali.

The district administration is urged to establish immediate communication channels for any requirements, Governor Ghulam Ali assures full cooperation.

Pakhtunkhwa Radio, V8 Theater to air Dengue awareness campaign



PESHAWAR (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Pakhtunkhwa Radio and V8 Theater under which dengue campaign will be conducted on Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.2 and dengue prevention measures and messages will be aired four times a day at different times of the day and night.

The aim and objective of signing the MoU is to give awareness to the general public regarding prevention and protection from ever-rising Dengue virus cases. Dengue can become dan-

gerous with the arrival of the rainy season, Khaista Rehman, President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Radio Broadcasters Forum and Managing Director of V8 Act Theater Group and Advertising Agency said during the signing of MoU.

Khaista Rehman met with Ghulam Hussain Ghazi, Station Director of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar and signed an agreement regarding a special radio campaign to prevent dengue virus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Radio Broad-

casters Forum expressed his happiness that under the leadership of Ghulam Hussain Ghazi, Pakhtunkhwa Radio is on the path of continuous development while all the obstacles in the way of advertising and revenue generation have also been removed thanks to him.

He reiterated his commitment that he will give them more publicity campaigns in the future so that Radio Pakhtunkhwa becomes a source of public entertainment and information and awareness as well as bringing financial benefits to the provincial treasury.

Free insulin distribution plan to be expanded

PESHAWAR (APP): The scope of the Free Insulin for Treatment of Diabetes programme to be expanded to the whole of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the number of patients in the province has reached a staggering 7.5 million figure.

This disclosure was made by renowned Endocrinologist and Diabetologist, Dr. A.H.Aamir while speaking at a press conference held in connection with the launching of Guidelines for Management of Type B Diabetes Mellitus and Cardiometabolic syndrome here on Saturday.

The event was organized by the Pakistan Endocrine Society (PES) while renowned endocrinologists including President of PES, Dr. Ibrar Ahmad, Dr. Khalid Usman were also present on the occasion.

Talking to media persons, Dr. A.H.Aamir said the number of active diabetes patients is around 7.5 million in KP while the same number of people are on the edge of becoming diabetic.

He said the Free Insulin distribution programme is presently active in 26 districts of KP. However, he continued, the Federal government is approaching for contributing its share in the treatment of diabetes as a result of which the programme will be extended to the whole of the province.

Dr. Aamir dispelled the impression that the Free Insulin distribution programme is being stopped in the province. He said due to some procurement issues usually government departments face in the month of June and July, the stock was unavailable in some districts but soon will restart.

To another question, he said, free insulin distribution cannot be provided under the Sehat Insaf Card Health scheme which only covers indoor patients' treatment.

Speaking on the occasion, President PES, Dr. Ibrar said the number of diabetic patients is increasing very rapidly and most of the patients are young-

sters between the age of 20 to 40. He said due to bad eating habits and lifestyle, youngsters are becoming diabetics very rapidly and its alarming because our country has a large number of youngsters.

Regarding the prevalence of diabetes in Pakistan, Dr. Ibrar said it has reached 33 million with the same number of people on the edge of developing disease.

Dr. Ibrar said the majority of the patients are poor with fewer resources for taking proper treatment and medicines and the the best way to cure is prevention.

He said the guidelines are launched to both the doctors and patients so that easy treatment and prevention measures for promotion among people.

Pakistan Endocrine Society gives prime importance to the dissemination of knowledge and updating our fellow physicians to modify their practice according to the current international standards.



PESHAWAR: A man selling balloons outside in Ganta Gar.

Congo virus resurfaces in province

PESHAWAR (APP): Congo virus resurfaced and has raised its head in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with three positive cases of Congo reported in Peshawar in one day.

According to details, all three patients were shifted to Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC). One patient belongs to Kohat, the other belongs to Batkhila, Swat and the third infected patient belongs to Bara Tehsil, Khyber District, spokesperson of Hayatabad Medical Complex told APP here on Saturday.

He said the hospital management was imparting treatment to all three persons infected with Congo virus. Giving detail, he said, Noor Khela, a 27-year-old woman, hailing from Bara Tehsil, Khyber District and was admitted in the hospital on July 15.

He disclosed that Jawad Khan, age 21, is admitted on July 18 and is hailing from Kohat district while the third patient infected with Congo virus is 18-year-old Muhammad Hamza, hailing from Kohat and he is admitted in the hospital on July 19.

Fatimid foundation held seminar F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fatimid Foundation has arranged awareness seminar on Thalassemia with cooperation of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Peshawar at Hayatabad center, on Saturday.

Assistant Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Malak Zulfikar Ahmad along with National Center for welfare of laborers and child, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal school female staff, lady health workers, BHU Hayatabad staff participated in the awareness seminar.

Women Empowerment Peshawar staff members, Fatimid Foundation Dr. Tariq Masood, Dr. Syed Farooq Shah, Frontier Foundation Administrator Dr. Fakhar Zaman, Hamza Foundation RMO Abrar Ullah Jan and Zondoon Sahibzada Bashir were also present in the seminar.

Fatimid Foundation Badar Hussain stressed on screening test regarding thalassemia for both male and females before marriage to control the genetic disease while addressing the seminar. However, the participants also arranged an awareness walk while chanting slogan against thalassemia.

Bodies of 2 women found in Regi area

PESHAWAR (APP): The bodies of the two women found in Regi area of District Peshawar and were shifted to hospital for post-mortem, Officials of the Regi Police said here Saturday.

The women were identified, the police official said, adding, the bodies were shifted to the hospital for post-mortem.

According to Police, both women had left their home for the doctor on Thursday, last. A case was registered on the complaint of the father. The Police also arrested the alleged accused named in the case. Apparently both died due to 11,000 lines of electric current, Police said.

Investigation has been started on various aspects related to the incident, the Police said.

Drug addicted woman gives birth to baby

PESHAWAR (APP): A drug addicted woman gives birth to a baby wherein the officials of KP Department of Social Welfare and Peshawar district administration reached the spot to help the intoxicated woman and the new-born child on Hayatabad Industrial Estate Road.

The officials, who reached the spot, said that they are monitoring the case and the relevant staff have been instructed to take good care of the baby and the woman in the medical facility center and ensure treatment.



PESHAWAR: Police personnel standing alert on way of procession.

FIA arrested 2 suspects involved in illegal currency exchange

PESHAWAR (APP): Under the direction of Deputy Director Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar Afzal Khan Niazi, 2 suspects involved in illegal currency exchange were arrested here on Saturday.

Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar raided the money changer franchise office in Dean Trade Center Peshawar, located in Money Changer, was also sealed.

The accused were running a money changer busi-

ness without a license. The accused were doing business on a revoked money changer license, an official said. He said Rs. 1.8 million, 2050 UAE dirhams, 500 Saudi riyals were recovered during the raid.

During the raid, the accused Atifullah was arrested, the official said. In the second operation, Atif Afridi, the alleged accused involved in the reference handi, was arrested from Dean Trade Center. Rs.

343500 rupees and 16 checks of different banks were recovered from the possession of the accused.

The accused could not satisfy the authorities regarding the recovered currency. Handi reference receipts will also be recovered from the accused with cases under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act have been registered against the arrested alleged accused and further investigation is underway.

KP Food Authority conducts crackdown

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority here on Saturday conducted a crackdown against the adulteration mafia continued across the province in which the officials of the Authority seized 20,000 fake beverages from a godown at Swabi road Mardan and recovered a large batch of fake cold drinks.

The spokesperson of the Authority said that 20,000 liters of different branded beverages were recovered from the godown, which had to supply to different parts of the city. The spokesperson said that samples were examined on the spot through Mobile Labs by the food safety officers.

According to the details, the unhealthy cold drinks were confiscated for discarding by sealing the godown.

It was further told in detail that a case was registered against the owners under the Food Safety Act.

On this occasion, Director Operations Food Authority Altaf Hussain said in a statement issued from his office that traders involved in sale of non-standard and unhealthy food items would be dealt with iron hands and no concessions would be made.

Resignation call from PML-N leader

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a recent development, the leader of PML-N, Arbab Khizer Hayat, has demanded the immediate resignation of the ruling government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, attributing the current state of insecurity and failed governance as the primary reasons for the call.

Governor and the caretaker Chief Minister, along with their cabinet, have come under severe criticism for their inability to establish peace and order in the province. The rising incidents of terrorism and unrest in Peshawar and surrounding regions serve as stark evidence of the government's shortcomings in ensuring public safety.

Arbab Khizer Hayat has put forth a proposal for the urgent establishment of a new non-political governorship and a caretaker government in the province. He believes that a fresh approach is essential to address the security challenges effectively.

The situation in the province has escalated to the extent that the lives of innocent citizens, including children, are at constant risk. Recent acts of terrorism have resulted in tragic loss of precious lives, creating an

atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among the populace. In light of the deteriorating security situation and the failure to protect valuable lives and property, Arbab Khizer Hayat has emphasized the immediate need for decisive action. He urges the authorities to prioritize the safety and well-being of the people and promptly implement the proposal for a non-political administration in the province.

The call for resignation from the opposition leader highlights the gravity of the security crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The demand

comes as a wake-up call for the ruling government to address the pressing issues and restore peace and stability in the region.

As the situation unfolds, citizens and stakeholders anxiously await the government's response to the call for resignation and the proposed establishment of a new administration, hoping for effective measures to curb terrorism and safeguard the lives of the people. The developments in the coming days will determine the course of action to combat the prevailing security challenges in the province.



PESHAWAR: MD Small Industries Development Board Md. Iqbal Khattak, presiding over board meeting.

Completion of Ist phase of Rashakai SEZ attracting Rs85b investment - a milestone achievement

PESHAWAR (APP): Attracted about Rs85 billion investment so far, Rashakai Prioritized Special Economic Zone (RPSEZ) is going to become an international trade and industrial hub after completion of its phase ahead of six months of the completion time under CPEC in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Being the first mega project of CPEC completed in KP, RPSEZ's first phase inauguration has reflected the strong commitment and economic cooperation between the time-tested friends Pakistan and China.

It demonstrated an exceptional efforts and unwavering commitment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC) Govt of KP and China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC).

Encompassing 247 acres of modern facilities designed to attract domestic and foreign investors, Phase I of RPSEZ helps spur economic growth and job creation for skilled workforce that would fur-

ther strengthening Pakistan-China cooperation in diversified fields under CPEC.

"RPSEZ's Phase-I houses 18 zone enterprises, with seven under construction; mobilizing an estimated investment of Rs. 85 billion that would become a catalyst for regional prosperity, economic and industrial development," said Javed Iqbal Khattak, Chief Executive Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC) while talking to APP.

"RPSEZ Phase-1 scheduled to be completed by December this year, was completed six months ago and was inaugurated by caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan on Friday last," he said.

Located at most strategic site on Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway in Nowshera district with major international markets of Central Asia, Afghanistan, CARs, China and SAARC in its proximity, RPSEZ is an emerging

international business hub that would serve as a trade gateway for promotion of industrialization and economic development of Pakistan.

The project will bolster industrialization, promote Small and Medium Enterprises, construction, pharmaceutical, food and marble industries in addition to increase trade volume between Pakistan and aforementioned countries.

"The completion of RPSEZ Phase-I comprising three phases and covering an area of 247 acres, has reflected the better team-work and coordination with China Road and Bridge Company (CRBC)," he added. He said that RPSEZ Phase-1 was the first completed project initiated under CPEC in Pakistan, adding the marvelous performance shown by a public sector company of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has given an edge to the province over other provinces of the country.

Javed Iqbal Khattak said that Rs85 billion investment has already been

made in the zone and chineese several domestic and major industrial groups started investing in it.

Units for manufacturing Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) a raw material for pharmaceutical industrial units are going to be setup and another investor also shown interest in establishing a vaccine manufacturing unit, he said, adding Paki-stan Oxygen, a largest oxygen manufacturing unit, has already invested in RSPEZ.

Following official announcement of CPEC, around 37 zones were proposed as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for all provinces of Pakistan out of which establishment of nine SEZs were prioritized including RPSEZ, Dhabeji, Bostan Industrial Zone, Allama Iqbal Industrial City Faisalabad, ICT Model Industrial Zone Islamabad, Industrial Park Pakistan Steel Mills Port Qasim, Mirpur Industrial Zone AJK, Mohmand Marble City and Moqpondass in Gilgit-Baltistan.



In brief

Women, girl rescued

SUKKUR (INP): The police rescued three kidnapped women and a girl during an operation here on Saturday. A day earlier, members of Kalhoro and Mehr community exchanged fire over wedding dispute in suburban village of Pano Aqil which resulted in death of two youth and left five others injured. Three women and a girl of Kalhoro community were also abducted after armed clash. Committed efforts of police resulted in recovery of the kidnapped women and a girl within 24 hours. SSP Sukkur Singhar Malik handed over the recovered women and girls to their heirs. He said that operation to arrest the culprits was underway and they would have to face the consequences.

13-year-old boy drowned

KASUR (INP): A seven-grade student drowned in rainwater in Sahbni Wala village at the outskirts of Kasur. According to the details, 13-years old Hussain went outside to take shower in the rainwater but didn't return home. The reports said that a brick kiln owner had dug up deep holes where the rainwater accumulated. The 13-year-old fell in the holes and drowned in the rainwater. The situation went out of control in the area and Khudian Khas police reached the spot to control the law and order. The heirs of Hussain blocked the road for traffic and demanded strict action against the brick kiln owner.

Youth dies, two hurt in mishap

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): A youth was killed while two others sustained injuries as a motorcycle collided with an electric pole at Qasba Gujrat. According to Rescue officials, three friends riding on a motorcycle were going somewhere riding on a motorcycle when suddenly their motorcycle went uncontrolled and collided with an electric pole at Qasba Gujrat. As a result, the youth namely Mudassar died on the spot while Muhammad Hussain and Muhammad Naveed sustained injuries. The injured were shifted to the rural health centre in Qasba Gujrat after providing first aid. The incident took place due to over speeding.

Six-member gang held

FAISALABAD (INP): The police busted a six-member gang involved in kidnapping for ransom and recovered Rs4.1 million from their possession. Addressing a press conference in Peoples Colony on Saturday, SP Madina Town the abductors kidnapped Hamza from Chak Jhumra and received Rs5 million ransom for his release. The SP said that on directives of CPO, special team was constituted which busted six-member gang and recovered 4.1 million ransom money from their possession. He said that the police have recovered over Rs6.6 million ransom money in 11 such cases. The SP said that the police committed to provide complete security to public lives and properties and comprehensive plan has been chalked out in this connection. Meanwhile, the police busted a four-member robber gang, recovered stolen bikes, arms and looted cash from their possession. According to details, Mamu Kanjan police on a tip-off launched crackdown against criminals in jurisdiction. During operation, four members of Qasim alias Qasim and comprising Imran, Tanveer and Ameen were arrested.

Muqam invites ANP stalwart to join PML-N

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Adviser to Prime Minister and President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Amir Muqam on Saturday visited the residence of Awami National Party leader Senator Zahid Khan in Dir and formally invited him to join the Muslim League-N.

Addressing the gathering at his residence, Engineer Amir Muqam praised the role of Zahid Khan and his family in the development of Malakand Division. Engineer Amir Muqam said that Senator Zahid Khan worked a lot for the development and prosperity of the people of the area. President Muslim League-N Engineer Amir Muqam

said that our aim is also to serve the people and today he come here specially to the residence of ANP stalwart to invite him to play his role in the progress and prosperity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that in the best interest of this region, province and country, we all should unite and fight for the betterment of province and country. He said that Zahid Khan is a very experienced politician and we want to work together for the betterment of the country and the region.

He expressed the hope that Zahid Khan will seriously considered his invitation to join mainstream party. He also appreciated the elders of the area and

their services for the betterment of the province. Senator Zahid Khan thanked Prime Minister's Advisor Engineer Amir Muqam for his visit to his residence and said that he will discuss the matter with his supporters and elders of the area.

He said that he will take a decision after consulting his supporters and elders and will inform about his decision in this regard very soon. On this occasion, Divisional President of Muslim League-N Malik Jahanzeb Khan, Provincial Vice President Malik Bahram, other senior leadership of Muslim League-N, Chairman Board of Directors Pesco Faizullah Khan were also present.

FC hold free medical camp in Mohmand

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North continues its commitment to improving healthcare access for residents in remote areas of Mohmand by organizing a successful free medical camp in Khayali Kor Suran Valley.

The medical camp, aimed at providing basic health facilities to the locals, was met with immense gratitude and appreciation from the community.

The event saw the active participation of dedicated doctors and nursing staff who selflessly provided their services and distributed free medicines to a total of 530 patients. Among the beneficiaries, there were 175 male, 130 female, and 225 children who received free medical check-ups and essential

medications. The local community members expressed their heartfelt appreciation to Frontier Corps North for arranging such a crucial initiative that directly addresses their healthcare needs.

Two technical training concluded for tribal youth: Frontier Corps North, in its ongoing efforts to uplift the youth of tribal areas and equip them with essential skills, successfully conducted a two-week Technical Training Program for unemployed and unskilled youth in Tehsil Ambar and Pindiali, Mohmand district. The program aimed to provide valuable training in various technical fields, enabling the participants to enhance their employability prospects and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.

The training program featured comprehensive

courses in Plumbing, Carpentry, First Aid Training and Solar System Installation. A total of 63 enthusiastic individuals actively participated in the program, with 33 attendees from Tehsil Ambar and 30 from Tehsil Pindiali, Mohmand. The Closing Ceremony was a momentous occasion where the students were presented with certificates acknowledging their successful completion of the training.

The participants from Tehsil Ambar and Pindiali expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Frontier Corps North for providing them with this invaluable opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge. They praised the Security Forces for their unwavering focus on the youth of tribal areas and their commitment to empowering them with education and vocational training.

Kidnap of newborn; Protesters block road

SARGODHA (INP): A heart-wrenching incident unfolded at Dr. Faisal Masood Teaching Hospital as the parents of a newborn boy staged a protest when their infant mysteriously went missing from the nursery ward four days ago.

According to the media reports, Riaz-ul-Hassan, a resident of Chak No 30-SB, had brought his newborn son to the District Teaching Hospital for essential treatment. After a thorough examination, hospital staff tagged the baby and transferred him to the nursery ward.

Distraught and anxious, the father inquired about his baby boy's whereabouts, only to be informed that the child had disappeared from the hospital. The family promptly registered a case with the Factory Area police station to initiate investigations.

In an emotionally charged scene, parents and relatives gathered outside the hospital, blocking Khushab Road in protest. Their demands were simple but urgent: they wanted the police to recover the kidnapped child without delay and bring the kidnapper to

justice.

Medical Superintendent Dr. Younis Siddiqui assured that a special committee had been established to look into the matter. If any hospital staff were found to be involved, strict actions would be taken against them. In an effort to aid the investigation, CCTV footage from the ward was obtained and handed over to the police team. As the Factory Area police team delves into the case, the community remains on edge, hoping for a swift resolution and the safe return of the innocent child.

Doctors staff to provide assistance during Muharram

SARGODHA (INP): Dr. Mushtaq Bashir Akif, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Health Authority Sargodha, has announced the deployment of doctors, paramedics, and lady health supervisors to provide medical assistance during Muharram-ul-Haram days. Their duties will cover all majalis (religious gatherings) and mourning processions across the district.

In a statement to the media, Dr. Mushtaq emphasized that all hospitals in

the city have been put on high alert to handle any potential emergencies.

The authorities have reserved beds in both government and private hospitals exclusively for use during the Ashura days. Additionally, blood banks have been instructed to maintain a sufficient supply of extra blood bags.

To ensure efficient coordination, a 24-hour operational control room has been established at the dis-

trict health office. This step aims to provide timely assistance and support during the observance of the sacred period.

Bike-lifter held: Police on Saturday arrested an alleged bike-lifter and recovered five stolen bikes from him. A team of Atta Shaheed police station conducted raid and arrested Abdul Rehman, who was involved in dozens of motorcycle-lifting incidents. A case was registered against the accused.

DSP visits blood foundation centre

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Superintendent Police Hafizabad Rana Jamil Qaisar pledge to extend his cooperation for continuously supply of blood to children suffering from thalassemia to arrange blood donation camps on monthly basis as well as to assist for making thalassemia awareness campaign successful.

While visiting Sundas Foundation accompanied by ASI Shahid Rafiq, he observed pathetic condition of young patients and the agonized faces of their par-

ents sitting beside during their blood transfusion.

On this occasion, Ex-District Nazim Hafizabad and Pattern-In-Chief Sundas Foundation Col. (R) Ali Ahmad Awan said that the blood is a lifesaving asset for the Thalassemic Children and the management of blood transfusion centre is making its efforts to ensure availability of blood for fulfilling of requirements of diseased juvenile but it is not possible without cooperation of people belongs to different segments of society and blood donors. He

welcome pledge, commitment of DSP Rana Jamil Qaisar and Police Force for providing all possible assistance to supply of blood for Thalassemia patients.

AAC visits edu institutions

F.P. Report

HANGU: On the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner Hangu Fazl Akbar, Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue Hangu Amanullah Saturday visited various government educational institutions in Hangu and checked the availability of various basic facilities there. During his visit to various educational institutions in Hangu besides checking different facilities, he also inspected the security cameras, water, electricity and washrooms for the security men deployed in connection with the security of Muharram.



SHANGLA: DPO Sajjad Sahibzada inspecting various areas during his visit to Bisham.

Three of a family killed in Charsadda

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: As many as three persons of a family were killed in an exchange of fire between two parties in Mirakkel area of Parrang Police Station, Charsadda on Saturday.

Three people died as a result of firing, Police also confirmed the incident. Father and son are also among the dead, Police said, adding, the bodies were shifted to Charsadda Hospital for post-mortem and legal proceedings.

Three die as wall collapses in Mansehra

MANSEHRA (INP): At least three people died and four other injured in wall collapse incidents in Mansehra after heavy rain lashed the area. Rescue sources said that heavy rain continued in Mansehra on Friday-Saturday night resultantly walls of three houses collapsed.

As a result of wall collapse incidents, a woman and two children died while four people were injured. Heavy downpour also flooded the nullahs of Konash and Siran valleys. The injured were shifted to different hospitals of respective areas for treatment.

Floods wreaks havoc in Chitral

CHITRAL (INP): Several houses and link bridges were washed away in Lower and Upper Chitral due to floods as residents of Miragram, Koghzi, Kari and Kailash Valley have evacuated their houses.

Deputy Commissioner Chitral Muhammad Ali said that land communication had been disconnected with Upper Chitral. The district administration has dispatched rescue teams to the affected areas, the DC said. Garm Chashma and Dineen Road had been opened, he said, adding, the highways of Chitral were flooded but there was no loss of life had been reported.

CIA police seizes drug

HUB (PPI): CIA Hub police claimed to have seized 10kg crystal drug from the possession of two alleged drug peddler in an operation conducted in Allahabad town of area of Hub in Balochistan province on Saturday.

Following the directions of SSP Hub, Murad Khan, staff of CIA Hub police under the supervision of Wahid Baloch, Incharge, CIA, Hub seized ten kilo crystal drug from the possession of two drug peddler namely Salman Askani and Naeem Askani, residents of Allahabad town in a raid conducted in Allahabad town area of Hub. Further investigation was underway.

KP Governor asked to keep promise

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir journalists' community has demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali to implement his pledge and take practical steps for releasing Rs 500,000 he had announced for the Timergara press club. The demand was made during a general body meeting of the press club held with president of the body Ismail Anjum.

Speaking on the occasion Mr Anjum said the KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali had announced Rs 500,000 for the press club during the oath taking ceremony of the press club some six months ago. He said the Governor's office was contacted again

and again but to no avail. He said the press club had been facing financial problems due to lack of funds and the journalists were finding it hard to afford its recurrent expenditure.

Anjum said the press club was not provided with its due funds during the last three years. He said that some of the JUI-F local activists were creating hurdles in releasing funds for the press club. He demanded of the KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali to keep his words and release the Rs 500,000 he had announced for the Timergara press club.

Cancellation of Nadra assistant director transfer demanded: Political and social activists hailing from Talash in Lower Dir on

Saturday demanded of the government and concerned authorities to immediately cancel the transfer order of the zonal assistant director Nadra Muhammad Arshad who was transferred to the Bajaur zone.

Talking to local journalists the activists led by Peer Imtiaz Ahmad said the Nadra assistant director Muhammad Arshad had always served the people alike and every one liked him.

The activists said that a case regarding the restoration of Talash Nadra officials was in the court, due to which the restoration of the office took time. They said the office would soon be made functional once copy of the decision was received.

Residents establishing road to forest's villages

F.P. Report

BUNER: The residents of Amlook area of Mandanr tehsil, Buner establishing three kilometers road from Malka with community support which will facilitate thousands of locals especially will pave access for tourists to reach Baghoona area of historical Mahaban (Mother of Forests) mountainous region.

A resident of Amlook village named Khan Zada told to The Frontier Post that villagers had collected Rs4 lakh to initiate excavation on the road. He added that two kilometers way is excavated while construction works are under progress near Maspakheen village while hopeful for completion as soon as possible.

Village Council general councilor and civil society member Syed Kalam Durrani claimed that the local residents had provided full assistance both in physical and financial aspects to ensure access-

bility of the Amlook village with main road. He said that Jammal Islami PK-25 candidate Raj Wali Khan had donated Rs40 thousands for the construction of the road while requested others to help in every aspect for the community.

Another resident namely Ayub Khan said that locals are providing financial support as well as working as laborer free of cost for their community. He appreciated each and everyone who had support the establishment of road in every aspect.

One Farooq Nawaz stated that the residents had initiated the project without any political narrative and claimed that villagers are committed for completion of the road irrespective of their political difference.

Similarly, Sher Rehman argued that the completion of road will connect Mahaban historical mountainous region with Mardan and Hazara divisions as well as with Tor Ghar, Haripur and Swabi

districts which will pave for economic prosperity of the region.

However, Syed-uz-Zaman claimed that the residents are compelled to carry their patients on shoulders to nearest hospital and added that most of the patients are expired before reaching to the health facility. He argued that the road will ensure accessibility of motorcar to the premises which will minimize fatality ratio among the residents. It is worthy mention that Mahaban (Mother of Forests) mountainous region is most scenic and historical place in the sub-continent while different rare medicinal species found in the region.

Now it is responsibility of concerned authorities to ensure accessibility to the premises because provincial government with assistance of UNDP has established picnic spot at Bar Char area of Mahaban but didn't operationalized after five years of completion due to negligence.

KP FSA crackdown against adulteration mafia

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety crackdown against adulteration mafia continued throughout the province wherein the officials team seized 20,000 fake beverages from a Godown here on Saturday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, while continuing the province-wide crackdown against adulteration and fake cold drinks, food safety team Mardan,

on receiving information, raided on a Godown located at Swabi road and recovered a large batch of fake cold drinks from Mardan City.

Issuing details by the spokesperson KP FS and HFA said that 20,000 liters of different branded beverages were recovered from the Godown, which had to supply to different parts of the city. The spokesperson said that samples were examined on the spot through Mobile Labs by the food safety officers.

According to details the unhealthy cold drinks were taken into government custody for discarding and the godown was sealed. It was further told in detail that a case was registered against the owners under the Food Safety Act. On this occasion, Director Operations Food authority Altaf Hussain said in a statement issued from his office that traders of non-standard and unhealthy food items will be dealt with iron hands and no concessions will be made.

Chagai levies arrests bike snatcher

CHAGAI (PPI): Chagai levies on Saturday claimed to have arrested bike snatcher in an operation conducted in Girdi Jungle area of district Chagai in Balochistan province. One alleged bike snatcher was also arrested during the operation.

In compliance with the

directives of high-ups, levies force, Chagai under the supervision of Incharge, Levies Station, Girdi Jungle arrested alleged bike snatcher namely Faridullah son of Abdullah in an operation conducted in Girdi Jungle area of district Chagai.

Stolen Honda CG-125

was recovered from the possession of alleged bike snatcher. The alleged bike snatcher was shifted to Levies Station, Girdi Jungle and handed over to the Investigation staff of levies station Girdi Jungle for investigation. Further investigation was underway.



Russia comes under pressure at UN to avoid global food crisis

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Russia came under pressure at the United Nations Security Council from its ally China and developing countries as well as Western nations to avert a global food crisis and quickly revive Ukrainian grain shipments.

Moscow was also criticized by the UN and council members for attacking Ukrainian ports after pulling out of the year-old grain deal and destroying port infrastructure — a violation of international humanitarian law banning attacks on civilian infrastructure. In response to Russia declaring wide areas in the Black Sea dangerous for shipping, the UN warned that a military incident in the sea could have “catastrophic consequences.”

Russia said it suspended the Black Sea Grain Initiative because the UN had failed to overcome obstacles to shipping its food and fertilizer to global markets, the other half of the Ukraine grain deal. The Kremlin said it would consider resuming Ukrainian shipments if progress is made in overcoming the obstacles, including in banking arrangements. China’s deputy UN ambassador Geng Shuang noted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ commitment to make every effort to ensure that both Ukrainian grain and Russian food and fertilizer get to world markets. He expressed hope that Russia and the UN will work together to resume exports from both countries “at an early date” in the interest of “maintaining international food security and alleviating the food crisis in developing countries in particular.”

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield accused Russia of using the Black Sea as “blackmail” and playing political games, pointing to Moscow’s export of more grain than ever before at higher prices. She called on the Security Council and all 193 UN member nations to come together and urge Russia to resume negotiations in good faith. Several developing countries warned of the impact of the cutoff in Ukrainian

grain shipments, which has already led to a rise in wheat prices.

Gabon’s UN Ambassador Michel Biang said the grain deal had avoided a spark in grain prices and calmed the risk of food insecurity in the drought-affected Horn of Africa and other regions. He urged talks “to break the current deadlock” and avoid a humanitarian crisis. Mozambique’s UN Ambassador Pedro Afonso said Russia’s action is certain “to amplify global socio-economic stresses in a world already grappling with a perfect storm of conflict, climate change” and a loss of confidence in multilateral solutions.

Russia’s deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyansky said Russia stands ready to consider rejoining the deal if seven principles from the Russia-UN memorandum are implemented. He listed them as “the real not theoretical” lifting of Western sanctions on Russian grain and fertilizer exports, and the lifting of obstacles to Russian banks that service exports, including the immediate connection to the SWIFT global banking system. Russia also wants the delivery of spare parts for agricultural production to resume, a resolution to issues related to chartering vessels for Russian exports including insurance, the war-damaged ammonia pipeline from Russia to Ukraine to be fixed and other fertilizer issues resolved, Russian assets linked to agricultural production unfrozen, and “the resumption of the initial humanitarian nature of the grain deal,” he said.

Under the deal, Ukraine was given a green light to ship grain from three Black Sea ports, but following withdrawal Russia said it will consider a ship traveling to Ukrainian ports as being laden with weapons and will treat the country of its flag as a participant in the conflict on Kyiv’s side. Ukraine announced that it will also treat ships traveling to Russian Black Sea ports as military targets. Thomas-Greenfield told the council the United States has information that Russia

laid additional sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports and that Russia’s military may attack civilian shipping in the Black Sea “and lay blame on Ukraine for these attacks.”

UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo strongly condemned Russian attacks on Ukraine’s Black Sea ports and urged Moscow to stop them immediately. She said threats to target civilian vessels “are unacceptable” and warned that sea mines can endanger civilian navigation. “We strongly urge restraint from any further rhetoric or action that could deteriorate the already dangerous situation,” she said. “Any risk of conflict spillover as a result of a military incident in the Black Sea – whether intentional or by accident – must be avoided at all costs, as this could result in potentially catastrophic consequences to us all.”

China’s Geng called on the parties “to remain calm and exercise restraint,” abide by international humanitarian law and refrain from attacking civilian infrastructure, “and make every effort to curb the expansion of the conflict to prevent a larger scale humanitarian crisis.” UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told the council that a record 362 million people in 69 countries need assistance, “a number that has never been reached anywhere before,” requiring an unprecedented \$55 billion. He said the cutoff of Ukrainian grain shipments has already brought not only killings and injuries to civilians and damage to port infrastructure but a 9% spike in wheat prices, the largest since Russia’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The “humanitarian catastrophe” in Ukraine continues to reverberate around the world, Griffiths said, and for many of the 362 million people who need help, a cutoff in critical Ukrainian and Russian grain threatens the future of their families. “Some will go hungry, some will starve, many may die as a result of these decisions,” he said.

Iran denies oil on tanker seized by Jakarta belongs to Tehran

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran’s oil ministry said the oil cargo of an Iranian-flagged supertanker seized by Indonesia last week does not belong to Tehran, Iranian state media reported.

An oil ministry statement, reported by the country’s state media, did not identify the owner of the cargo of MT Arman 114, an Iranian-flagged supertanker suspected of involvement in the illegal transshipment of crude oil, which Indonesia’s coast guard said on July 11 it had seized.

“Published news linking the cargo of this ship to ... Iran have no validity and this is done with the aim of creating a negative atmosphere against our country,” the oil ministry statement said, without elaborating. Tensions between Tehran and Washington have been rising after Iran tried to seize the Richmond Voyager tanker, which was managed by US oil major Chevron, earlier in July in international Gulf waters.

The commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards’ navy said Iran would retaliate against any oil company unloading Iranian oil from another seized tanker, currently anchored outside the port of Houston. Iran’s foreign ministry also criticised the United States for leading a proposal at the UN shipping agency’s council to rescind Tehran’s bid to host a maritime event in October.

“America’s move ... proves that the political abuse of the United Nations’ technical and specialised bodies has no limit for this country,” Iran’s foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said in a statement carried by state media. US State Department spokesperson Matt Miller told reporters in a news briefing that Iran had no business hosting official international gatherings related to maritime affairs, because it had demonstrated its contempt for international maritime rules, standards, and safety.

The US Navy said in July it had intervened to prevent Iran from seizing two commercial tankers, including the Richmond Voyager, in the Gulf of Oman, in the latest in a series of attacks on ships in the area since 2019. Meanwhile, data from the public Equisis site and data analytics company MarineTraffic showed that one of Arman 114’s previous names was Grace 1. The Grace 1 was seized by British Royal Marine commandos in July 2019 on suspicion of trying to take oil to Syria in violation of EU sanctions. It was released the following month after a diplomatic standoff with the West.

WFP worker killed in Yemen

SANAA (AP): Gunmen shot and killed the head of one of the World Food Program’s offices in southwestern Yemen, the humanitarian organization said. No militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. In a statement, WFP said that Moayad Hameidi, a Jordanian, was shot by gunmen in the city of Taiz not long after he arrived in the country to assume the role as head of its office in that city. It added he died shortly after reaching a hospital.

Hameidi was shot by two armed assailants on a motorbike, according to a statement issued by a local security committee. No further information was given. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, also known by its acronym AQAP and believed to be one of the more dangerous branches of the al-Qaida terror network, is active in several regions in Yemen. Years of the country’s civil war have allowed the militants to maintain a presence in several areas around Yemen.

The war began in 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen and forced the government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition entered the war in early 2015 to try restore the internationally recognized government to power.

Biden picks female admiral to lead Navy

WASHINGTON (AP): President Joe Biden has chosen Adm. Lisa Franchetti to lead the Navy, an unprecedented choice that, if she is confirmed, will make her the first woman to be a Pentagon service chief and the first female member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Biden’s decision goes against the recommendation of his Pentagon chief. But Franchetti, the current vice chief of operations for the Navy, has broad command and executive experience and was considered by insiders to be the top choice for the job. In a statement, Biden noted the historical significance of her selection and said “throughout her career, Admiral Franchetti has demonstrated extensive expertise in both the operational and policy arenas.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin recommended that Biden select Adm. Samuel Paparo, the current commander of the Navy’s Pacific Fleet, several US officials said last month. But instead, Biden is nominating Paparo to lead US Indo-Pacific Command. A senior administration official said Biden chose Franchetti based on the broad scope of her experience at sea and ashore, including a number of high-level policy and administrative jobs that give her deep knowledge in budgeting and running the department.

At the same time, the official acknowledged that Biden understands the historical nature of the nomination and believes that Franchetti will be an inspiration to sailors, both men and women. The official spoke earlier on condition of anonymity because the nomination had not been made public.

Franchetti’s nomination will join the list of hundreds of military moves that are being held up by Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama. He



is blocking confirmation of military officers in protest of a Defense Department policy that pays for travel when a service member has to go out of state to get an abortion or other reproductive care. Biden, in his statement, blasted Tuberville for prioritizing his domestic political agenda over military readiness.

“What Senator Tuberville is doing is not only wrong — it is dangerous,” Biden said. “He is risking our ability to ensure that the United States Armed Forces remain the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. And his Republican colleagues in the Senate know it.” Franchetti is slated to serve as the acting Navy chief beginning next month when Adm. Michael Gilday, the current top naval officer, retires as planned.

Several women have served as military service secretaries as political appointees, but never as their top uniformed officer. A woman, Adm. Linda L. Fagan, is currently the commandant of the Coast Guard. She, however, is not a member of the Joint Staff. The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security, not the Pentagon. The news last month that the defense chief had recommended Paparo stunned many in the Pentagon because it was long believed that Franchetti was in line for

the top Navy job.

In a statement, Austin praised the nomination, saying, “I’m very proud that Admiral Franchetti has been nominated to be the first woman Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where she will continue to inspire all of us.” A surface warfare officer, she has commanded at all levels, heading US 6th Fleet and US Naval Forces Korea. She was the second woman ever to be promoted to four-star admiral, and she did multiple deployments, including as commander of a naval destroyer and two stints as aircraft carrier strike group commander.

Paparo, who if confirmed will replace Adm. John Aquilino, is a naval aviator and a TOPGUN graduate with more than 6,000 flight hours in Navy fighter jets and 1,100 landings on aircraft carriers. A Pennsylvania native, he graduated from Villanova University and was commissioned into the Navy in 1987. Prior to his Pacific tour, he was commander of naval forces in the Middle East, based in Bahrain, and also previously served as director of operations at US Central Command in Florida. Biden also said he will nominate Vice Adm. James Kilby to be the vice chief of the Navy and tap Vice Adm. Stephen Koehler to head the Pacific Fleet.

UN expert decries ‘mass arbitrary detention’ of children in Syria

GENEVA (Reuters): A United Nations expert voiced concern that tens of thousands of children were being detained arbitrarily in northeastern Syria based on their alleged ties to Islamic State and in violation of international law.

Fionnuala Ni Aolain, a UN Special Rapporteur, said a day after returning from the region that she was also concerned about the “snatching” of hundreds of boys from camps. Thousands of internal refugees and families of suspected IS fighters including Syrians, Iraqis and other nationals are housed in detention camps across the region after fleeing from jihadist-held areas during the Syria conflict.

“The thing I will say that concerned me the most and my team the most as we visited northeast Syria was the mass indefinite and arbitrary detention of children, particularly boys in various types of facilities,” she said. Their detention in camps, prisons and centres was “premised on the alleged threat that they pose to security based on their or their parents’ alleged prior links with Daesh,” she added, using a synonym for IS.

Ni Aolain was speaking the day after what she says was the first visit to the region by a UN human rights

expert. Among the places she visited was the Kurdish-run al-Hol camp, which holds around 55,000 people including 31,000 children. It also contains third-party nationals from Western countries despite UN pressure to take them back. The northeast of Syria including al-Hol falls under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a US-backed group. An official from the SDF-affiliated authorities that run the region did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

SDF officials regularly call on foreign countries to repatriate families of Islamic State militants in the camps. Ni Aolain described conditions at al-Hol as “dire and extreme,” saying the temperature was 50 Celsius during her visit. The term “camp” is inappropriate, she said, since people are not free to come and go.

“There appears to be no understanding that it is in absolute contravention of international law, to detain children in what appears to be an unending cycle of cradle-to-grave detention,” she said. She also raised concerns about the separation of hundreds of adolescent boys from their mothers in camps based on the

alleged security risk they posed. She did not say where they went but has previously said they went to unknown locations.

“Every single woman I spoke to made clear that it was the snatching of children that provided the most anxiety, the most suffering, the most psychological harm,” she said. “The rationale for taking these boys simply does not stand up to scrutiny.” In February, UN rights experts expressed grave concern about reports that at least 10 boys were taken away from another camp, Roj, by the authorities in northeastern Syria.

They said there was a pattern of forcibly removing boys who reach the ages of 10 or 12 from the camps and separating them from their mothers and taking them to unknown locations, calling this completely unlawful. The SDF-affiliated autonomous administration said in a statement at the time the report was “far from the truth.” It said the camps’ administration from time to time removed adolescents because they were at the age at which they were at the highest risk of being influenced by extremism, saying they were put in “rehabilitation centres”.

Putin tells Poland any aggression against Belarus is attack on Russia

MOSCOW (Reuters): President Vladimir Putin accused NATO member Poland of having territorial ambitions in the former Soviet Union, and said any aggression against Russia’s neighbour and close ally Belarus would be considered an attack on Russia.

Moscow would react to any aggression against Belarus, which forms a loose “Union State” with Russia, “with all the means at our disposal”, Putin told a meeting of his Security Council in televised remarks.

Warsaw’s Security Committee decided to move military units to eastern Poland after members of the Russian Wagner mercenary force arrived in Belarus, the state-run news agency PAP quoted its secretary as saying.

Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was shown in a video welcoming his fighters to Belarus, telling them they would take no further part for now in the war in Ukraine but ordering them to gather strength for Wagner’s operations in Africa while they trained the Belarusian army. Prigozhin says Wagner, which led the conquest of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, is Russia’s most effective fighting force. But his frequent clashes with the Moscow defence establishment led him to stage an armed mutiny four weeks ago.

The insurrection ended with an agreement that Wagner fighters – many recruited from prison – could move to Belarus if they wished. Minsk said Wagner mercenaries had started to train Belarusian special forces at a military range just a few miles from the Polish border. Russia has in recent weeks begun stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus for the first time. The Kremlin said Putin would meet Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko,

with whom he speaks regularly, in Russia.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said that Germany and NATO were prepared to support Poland in defending the alliance’s eastern flank. Putin said there were press reports of plans for a Polish-Lithuanian unit to be used for operations in western Ukraine – parts of which in the past belonged to Poland – and ultimately to occupy territory there.

“It is well known that they also dream of the Belarusian lands,” he said, also without providing any evidence. “But as far as Belarus is concerned, it is part of the Union State (with Russia); unleashing aggression against Belarus will mean aggression against the Russian Federation,” Putin said. “We will respond to this with all the means at our disposal.”

Poland denies any territorial ambitions in Belarus. “The pathetic bore from the Kremlin is once again repeating lies about Poland and also trying to falsify the truth about the war against Ukraine,” Poland’s deputy minister coordinator of special services Stanislaw Zaryn told state-owned PAP news agency. “Vladimir Putin is also using historical revisionism again to spread false accusations against Poland.” Higher ranking Polish officials have so far not responded to Putin’s comments.

Russia arrests prominent military blogger critical of Putin: A prominent Russian military blogger, who has criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin and his military leaders for not fighting harder in Ukraine, was arrested in Moscow. Igor Girkin, also known as Igor Strelkov, was detained at his home and is facing extremism charges, according to his wife, Miroslava Reginskaya. He

appeared in a Moscow courtroom.

The pro-war blogger had ratcheted up his criticism of Putin in recent days, calling the Russian leader a “lowlife” and “cowardly bum.” For 23 years, the country was led by a lowlife who managed to ‘blow dust in the eyes’ of a significant part of the population,” Girkin said in a post, according to CNN.

“Now he is the last island of legitimacy and stability of the state,” he added. “But the country will not be able to withstand another six years of this cowardly bum in power.” The Russian army veteran and former Federal Security Service (FSB) officer helped Moscow annex Crimea in 2014 and later organized separatist militias in eastern Ukraine. He and two others were convicted by a Dutch court last November for their role in the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 over eastern Ukraine in 2014, which killed all 298 people on board.

Girkin’s arrest comes as Putin is seeking to restore order following a short-lived mutiny last month led by Wagner group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has also been highly critical of how the Kremlin is prosecuting the war. CIA chief Bill Burns said he believes Putin is trying to “buy time” as he decides what to do with the mercenary leader, who has spent time in Belarus and Russia since calling off his march on Moscow. Burns added that Prigozhin’s mutiny has exposed Putin’s weaknesses and misjudgments.

“If and when the Ukrainians make further advances on the battlefield, I think what that’s going to do is cause more and more Russians in the elite and outside the elite to pay attention to Prigozhin’s critique of the war as well,” he added.

UN agency in grueling debate over deep sea mining

SAN JUAN (AP): Members of a UN agency that governs international waters were locked in a fierce debate over whether to allow deep sea mining and set a new deadline for proposed regulations still stuck in draft mode.

The UN International Seabed Authority, which is based in Jamaica, began its two-week conference on the issue July 10 but discussions behind closed doors dragged on during the last day of the meeting. “It’s quite a marathon,” Michael Lodge, the agency’s secretary general, said at a press briefing. “There are still loose ends to tie up.”

The agency has yet to issue any provisional mining licenses, and it missed a July 9 deadline to approve a set of rules to govern such activity. Companies and countries can now apply for a mining license as demand surges for precious metals

that are found in the deep sea and are used in electric car batteries and other green technology. The UN agency has issued more than 30 exploration licenses but none for actual mining so far. Most of the exploration is focused in an area between Hawaii and Mexico that spans some 1.7 million square miles (4.5 million square kilometers), with the activity taking place at depths of up to 19,000 feet (6,000 meters).

Members of the International Seabed Authority said they expect to resume work on the proposed regulatory framework at the body’s November meeting, the third one of the year. Asked what would happen if a country or company applied for a deep sea mining license with no regulations in place yet, Lodge said the council would deal with things as they came

up. “The council has the ability to meet whenever it wishes,” he said.

Council President Juan José González Mijares said at the briefing that a regulatory framework has to be in place before any exploitation activity begins. A growing number of countries are calling for a moratorium or a precautionary pause on deep sea mining, saying they are concerned about the potential environmental impact. They want more scientific studies done first.

Scientists have warned that such activity could kick up silt storms and create noise and light pollution in a watery underworld that has barely been explored. Companies pushing for deep sea mining, however, argue that undersea mining would be cheaper and have less of an environmental impact than land mining.

Medics whipped in Sudan after convoy attacked

KHARTOUM (BBC): Medics in Sudan’s capital have been beaten and whipped by armed men who attacked their convoy, medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) says. A medical team was taking supplies to the Turkish Hospital in the south of Khartoum when it was attacked and one of their vehicles stolen.

Since the war erupted in mid-April, it is one of only two hospitals still operating in the south of city. Both are supported by MSF, which says its aid to them is now in jeopardy. The vicious power struggle over the last three months between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has devastated medical facilities in the city.

While more than three million people nationwide have fled their homes since April, millions of others are still stuck in Khartoum, struggling to find medicine and medical assistance. MSF is one of only a few international

aid groups still supporting hospitals in Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman, helping to keep afloat a health system that has been under strain for decades. It says it has treated more than 1,600 patients in these hospitals since the conflict began.

But the charity warned this might have to stop because of a dramatic deterioration in security with several incidents in which its staff had been targeted. During the encounter, the armed men began arguing with the 18 people in the MSF convoy made up of four trucks carrying medical supplies. As well as assaulting the team, the armed men threatened the life of one of the drivers before releasing him and making off with one of the vehicles.

“If an incident like this happens again, and if our ability to move supplies continues to be obstructed, then, regrettably, our presence in the Turkish Hospital will soon become untenable,” MSF’s

Christophe Garnier said in a statement. The confrontation took place not far from the hospital, where hundreds of patients, including those recently wounded in air strikes, are undergoing treatment.

“On a daily basis, this hospital receives around 15 war wounded patients, carries out lifesaving surgery and keeps patients with chronic diseases alive,” MSF said. According to the AFP news agency, the hospital is in an area of the city controlled by the RSF. Aerial bombardments have intensified in residential areas of Khartoum where the paramilitary fighters have their bases, it says.

Official figures put the number of dead in the conflict at around 3,000, but it is thought to be far higher. Some estimates from the western region of Darfur, which have seen the worst of the violence, say the death toll in one city alone is 11,000.

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573
E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com
Lahore Office: 0335-4026284
Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com
Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253
Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com
Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907
Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com
“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Rising Islamophobia and the need for global consensus

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif has strongly condemned yet another planned incident of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and vowed to launch a campaign to end the sacrilege of holy books in the Nordic state. According to the Prime Minister, the government will help create a common strategy to get rid of evil from the platform of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Shehbaz's remarks came after a man stomped on the Quran outside Iraq's embassy in Stockholm on Thursday but did not ignite the book, hours after protesters stormed Sweden's Diplomatic mission over a possible burning of the Quran. According to the Premier, the permission to desecrate the holy books, persons, and rituals was not the freedom of expression but rather, a way to constantly torment the world. The PM pledged to launch a campaign to reverse the decision to allow the desecration of the Torah, the Bible, and the Holy Quran and urged the OIC to play a role in representing the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah and do away with this evil.

There had been a sequence of planned incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran in the Nordic nation of self-claimed so-called enlightened Europe. Such deplorable and satanic acts are frequently repeated by individuals and groups for heinous motives while the ruling elite in Western nation blatantly encourages this infamous trend in the garb of freedom of expression and civil liberties. At the same time, western leaders failed to understand the fact that unrestricted freedoms sometimes abuse the human and religious rights of other citizens and cause grievances, and incited hatred and violence in the society. In fact, a few disbelievers are using European civil liberties and Swedish laws for the accomplishment of their personal agenda and satisfaction of their grudges against Islam which has not only cast grave concerns between the two biggest religions in the world but also inflamed tension between the Muslim world and Europe. The recurrent intentional Islamophobic acts in Stockholm had attracted condemnation from across the world while there is utmost frustration and anger among Muslims around the globe. Awfully, western nations particularly the Swedish government have not undertaken any serious legal, legislative, or administrative measures to prevent the re-occurrence of such heinous acts in the future. There is a wide-ranging consensus in Muslim nations for taking decisive steps against the Swedish government to compel it to fulfill its obligations under international law and the UN Charter.

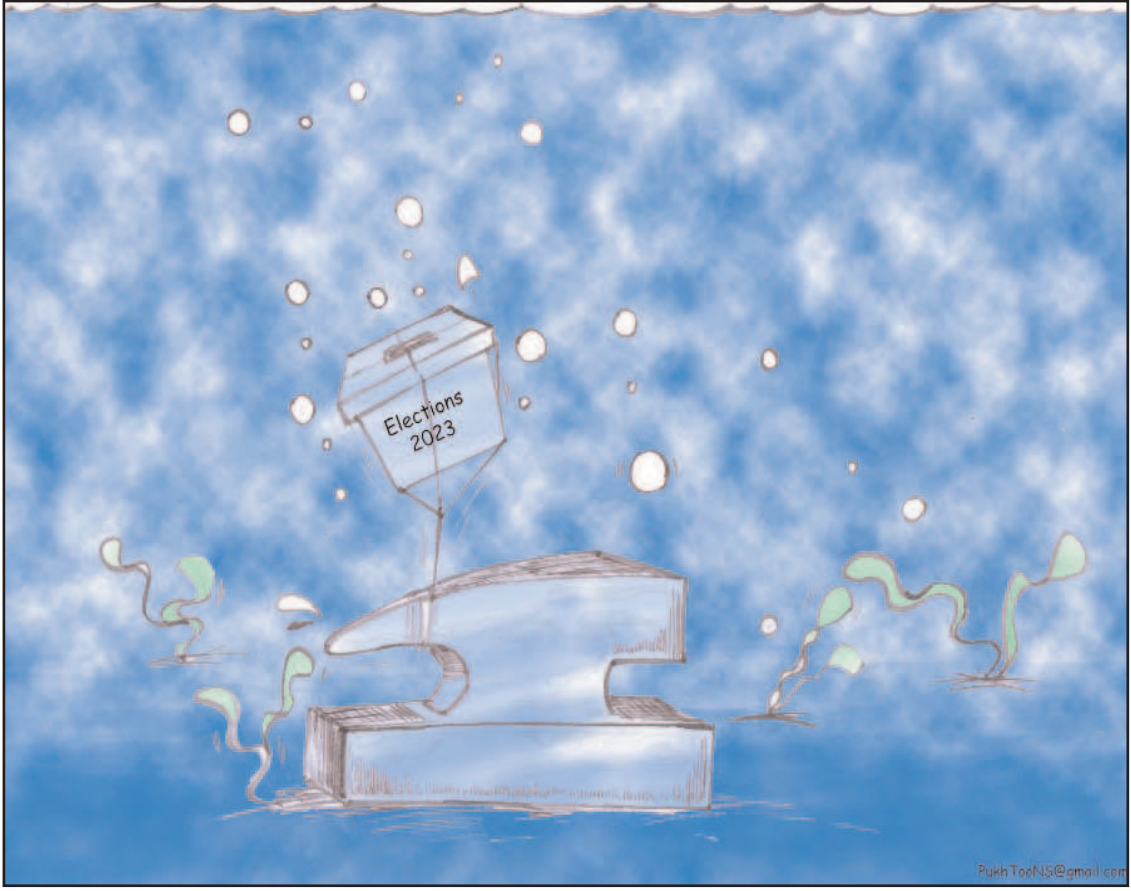
Unfortunately, the West has displayed extreme religious bigotry on the issue of Islamophobia, as Christianity has no concerns about hate speech or desecration of poise Christian personalities and religious books including the Bible, which is otherwise an unpardonable sin in Muslim society. Historically, hate speech, racism, and religion-based crimes had increased sharply in recent years after the rise of Nationalism and far-right politics in Western nations, where far-right politicians and religious clerics use anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments to boost their vote bank and public rating.

Historically, love for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the sanctity of the Holy Quran, Holy Mosques as well as respect for other prophets of Allah and divine religious books is an important aspect of Muslims' religious belief, while disregarding/disrespecting any of those important religious rituals seriously undermined Muslims' credence in their religion. Although, Muslims and their rulers across the world have embraced Western liberalism, pluralism, and broad-mindedness in their life yet they are not ready to compromise over their affiliation with the Holy Prophet and the divine book of the Holy Quran. There had been unimaginable outrage and public uprising against recent Islamophobic incidents in some Western countries and other nations particularly India, that calls for collective efforts of the entire Muslim Ummah to permanently pause this condemnable trend. Previously, the OIC and prominent Muslim nations including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey have made concerted efforts at the UN and the global forum passed a resolution condemning Islamophobia and designated March 15 as a global day to combat Islamophobia, hate crime, racism, and religious bigotry against Islam and Muslims in the world. Presently, Muslim Ummah preparing to launch a campaign to reverse the law which allows the desecration of the divine books in certain nations. Muslims around the globe demand stern actions against the individuals and states which are involved in Islamophobic acts including desecration of the holy Quran and sacred verses. Iraq has expelled the Swedish envoy and severed its diplomatic and trade ties with Stockholm, while the Pakistani public demanded the government boycott trade, expel the Swedish Ambassador, and break off its ties with Sweden.

In fact, Islamophobia is a common problem in the universe, as a tiny faction is continuously manipulating the situation and creating a gap between Islam and Christianity that is part of its wider political and satanic agenda. Therefore, global leaders specifically Muslim and Christian communities should collectively work to defeat this conspiracy through joint efforts, strict legislation, and appropriate legal action. So, this deplorable trend could not flourish and create a poisonous atmosphere anymore in this world.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Are China and US listening to each other?

Lorenzo Kamel

IMAGINE this scenario: China and Mexico establish a military alliance, training military personnel along the 3,145km (1954-mile) border shared by the United States and Mexico. Such an eventuality is not so far-fetched. In recent years, both China and Russia have massively increased their investments in Mexico (particularly in minerals, energy and technology). China and Russia are major economic trade partners for Mexico.

So, how would Washington react to that scenario? Perhaps the panicked headlines in the US over recent reports that China might set up a base in Cuba - a claim that Havana has denied - offer clues. For while the Soviet Union and, since 1991, Russia have invaded several countries - from Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979) to Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014 and 2022), while playing a nefarious role in others including Syria (2015) - the US has been involved in very similar and far more numerous invasions, regime changes and wars. Often, these have focused on strengthening US-friendly regimes or toppling unfriendly ones in its hemisphere, both in Central and South America: from Argentina to Bolivia, passing through Chile, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama and many more.

Cuba, which in 1950 had the fifth-highest per capita income in the Western hemisphere before a brutal US blockade contributed to its economic ruin, is an effective example of how the US conceptualised and imposed the notion of its "sphere of influence". At the other extreme is Hawaii, which represents a compelling example of how deindustrialisation and linguistic effacement worked. Indeed, what became America's 50th state (August 21, 1959) experienced one of the most effective attempted identity erasures of a native population, and its organised de-development (Iolani palace had electric lights before the White House): before US colonisation, Hawaii had electricity, mass transit,

railroads and one of the world's highest literacy rates. In a widely discussed open letter focused on the Russia-Ukraine war and published on the University of Berkeley's Blog by Yuriy Gorodnichenko and other economists, the authors did not linger on any of these aspects, but were keen to stress that "spheres of influence" became further evident after the signing of 2021's AUKUS security pact between Australia, the US and the United Kingdom. The pact, under which Canberra is to spend up to \$368bn on nuclear-armed submarines, poses a major proliferation risk and represents a violation of the spirit of the Nuclear Non-

At the other extreme is Hawaii, which represents a compelling example of how deindustrialisation and linguistic effacement worked. Indeed, what became America's 50th state (August 21, 1959) experienced one of the most effective attempted identity erasures of a native population, and its organised de-development (Iolani palace had electric lights before the White House): before US colonisation, Hawaii had electricity, mass transit, railroads and one of the world's highest literacy rates. In a widely discussed open letter focused on the Russia-Ukraine war and published on the University of Berkeley's Blog by Yuriy Gorodnichenko and other economists, the authors did not linger on any of these aspects, but were keen to stress that "spheres of influence" is a "notion that seems appropriate for the age of empires and not for the modern era".

ence" is a "notion that seems appropriate for the age of empires and not for the modern era". Yet that claim, while fully agreeable in itself, loses much of its legitimacy when applied to Russia and China selectively. Thanks also to over 750 military bases in eighty countries (or 85 percent of all overseas military bases), US spheres of influence extend far beyond "its hemisphere".

And this is particularly visible in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and increasingly, in the Indo-Pacific, where, in the words of European Union foreign policy chief Joseph Borell, "the future of our planet and of history will be decided", and from where by 2030, the overwhelming majority - 90 percent - of the 2.4 billion new members of the middle class are expected to reside. Look no further than the growing process of NATOisation in the Indo-Pacific, which

became further evident after the signing of 2021's AUKUS security pact between Australia, the US and the United Kingdom. The pact, under which Canberra is to spend up to \$368bn on nuclear-armed submarines, poses a major proliferation risk and represents a violation of the spirit of the Nuclear Non-

seas. At the same time, AUKUS aims to enable the US to project power across - and preserve its "sphere of influence" in - the Western and South Pacific, an area which is about 8,500km (5282 miles) from the US coast. Just as important as AUKUS, is a less talked about trilateral strategic grouping composed by Japan, the Philippine and the US (JAPHUS), which on June 1 launched its first-ever joint naval drills. This alliance - like the Quad security dialogue with Australia, India and Japan - will further enable Washington to implement its "integrated deterrence" policy against China's hardening posture over Hong Kong, Taiwan (which manufactures over 60 percent of the world's semiconductors and 90 percent of the most advanced ones) and other key strategic areas.

In the eyes of many Chinese intellectuals and politicians, both Taiwan and Hong Kong represent today the ultimate litmus test to heal from the final spillover effects of a "century of humiliation", the expression adopted in China to refer to the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China by Western powers and Japan from 1839, when the British authorities attacked China due to the emperor's decision to make opium illegal, to the 1940s. So when Chinese and American officials speak, as happened when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Chinese leader Xi Jinping on June 19, or when US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited Beijing in early July, are they listening to each other? Or are they participating in what philosopher Martin Buber described as "monologues disguised as dialogue"? Buber defined these as dialogues "in which two or more persons, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways" - effectively ending up talking to themselves. Buber wrote these words - in a different context of course - in 1947. Almost eight decades later they appear more prescient than ever, both in the Indo-Pacific and the world at large.

AUKUS, on the other hand, is effectively an anti-China military alliance, and its main raison d'être is to limit Beijing's increasingly assertive claims to the territories and maritime zones in the East and South China

seas. At the same time, AUKUS aims to enable the US to project power across - and preserve its "sphere of influence" in - the Western and South Pacific, an area which is about 8,500km (5282 miles) from the US coast. Just as important as AUKUS, is a less talked about trilateral strategic grouping composed by Japan, the Philippine and the US (JAPHUS), which on June 1 launched its first-ever joint naval drills. This alliance - like the Quad security dialogue with Australia, India and Japan - will further enable Washington to implement its "integrated deterrence" policy against China's hardening posture over Hong Kong, Taiwan (which manufactures over 60 percent of the world's semiconductors and 90 percent of the most advanced ones) and other key strategic areas.

In the eyes of many Chinese intellectuals and politicians, both Taiwan and Hong Kong represent today the ultimate litmus test to heal from the final spillover effects of a "century of humiliation", the expression adopted in China to refer to the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China by Western powers and Japan from 1839, when the British authorities attacked China due to the emperor's decision to make opium illegal, to the 1940s. So when Chinese and American officials speak, as happened when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Chinese leader Xi Jinping on June 19, or when US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited Beijing in early July, are they listening to each other? Or are they participating in what philosopher Martin Buber described as "monologues disguised as dialogue"? Buber defined these as dialogues "in which two or more persons, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways" - effectively ending up talking to themselves. Buber wrote these words - in a different context of course - in 1947. Almost eight decades later they appear more prescient than ever, both in the Indo-Pacific and the world at large.

Aljazeera

Biden's mixed results hurting his reelection chances

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

US President Joe Biden has now been in office for two and a half years, which gives us enough time to examine his progress on major domestic and foreign policy issues. Biden has already announced that he will be running for reelection in 2024. The success or failure of his administration's domestic and foreign policies will play a crucial role in his bid for reelection.

Biden's approval rating this month dipped to one of its lowest points so far. In general, a majority of Americans disapprove of the job he is doing as president, according to the Reuters/Ipsos poll. Biden's approval rating lingered at 40 percent in early July, which is slightly lower than the previous month's approval rating and is lower than the approval ratings of many of his predecessors, including Barack Obama and George W. Bush, at this point in their respective presidencies.

On the domestic level, the key issues for the American public include employment, inflation, immigration, the healthcare system and the crime rate. But the single most important concern for the American people is most likely related to the economy. The rising cost of living, along with the cost of basic needs and commodities, high interest rates, supply chain issues, a dwindling workforce and high inflation are putting a lot of pressure on the working class and on small businesses. It was reported in December last year that the average American family had lost about \$7,100 in purchasing power due to inflation and higher interest rates during Biden's presidency.

For example, Ashley Bachman, a mother of three and restaurant owner from West Virginia, stated: "Unfortunately, after COVID we have been hit with another crisis. The crisis of rising costs of everything ... Our little restaurant has been bleeding money due to all the increased costs and I don't know how much longer we'll be able to continue with the prices the way they are." And Chuck Mills, the owner and operator of his family's manufacturing company in Oklahoma, said: "The lack of workforce and supply chain issues, combined with inflationary pressures, have made this economy the most difficult economy I have dealt with in over four decades." Another key issue is the national debt, which increased by almost \$4 trillion in the first two years of the Biden administration. Some people also disapprove of the White House's approach to immigration, as there have been about 6 million illegal border crossings since Biden assumed office. There has also been an increase in the number of drug trafficking and human trafficking offenses.

On the other hand, the president's most noticeable domestic accomplishments include passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, aka the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Biden signed this \$1 trillion infrastructure bill into law. According to the White House, it will rebuild "America's roads, bridges and rails, expand access to clean drinking water, ensure

every American has access to high-speed internet, tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and invest in communities that have too often been left behind." The Biden administration also launched a historic \$20 billion program in grant competitions for investment in clean energy. In addition, the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act provides \$369 billion for climate-related investments and offers tax breaks.

When it comes to Biden's foreign policy, a majority of Americans disapprove of the way the president is handling America's affairs. This is most likely due to the administration's approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. His approval rating for the way he handled Russia in the buildup to its invasion last year was just 36 percent, according to a Gallup poll. Although some people believe that the president's cautious foreign policy has kept the US from being dragged into a full-fledged war with Moscow, many believe the administration has failed to adequately handle the situation. This is likely because the Biden administration does not appear to have an articulate and clear agenda or an endgame for resolving the conflict. In other words, the administration's policy seems to be anchored in only providing weapons, ammunition and financial assistance to Ukraine. For example, Biden in February announced nearly half a billion dollars of additional assistance for Kyiv, including "the delivery of artillery ammunition, anti-armor systems, and air surveillance radars to help protect the Ukrainian people from aerial bombardments." However, National Public Radio reported: "After Congress appropriated more than \$112 billion in military and economic support in the space of a single year - and with no signs of an end to the conflict - polls show a growing number of Americans feel the United States is giving Ukraine too much." Another foreign policy issue affecting Biden's approval rating is the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan, which many people viewed as being poorly planned.

On the other hand, the Biden administration has fulfilled the president's promise of repairing the damaged ties between the US and its European allies. Under Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, relations between the transatlantic partners appeared to have been undermined beyond simple disagreements. The Biden administration has pursued a more conventional foreign policy with the EU by reaffirming American support for NATO. This has allowed Biden to restore normality in transatlantic ties. Nevertheless, challenges remain when it comes to trade and subsidy concerns. In a nutshell, Biden's overall approval rating is low due to his administration's handling of key issues, including the economy and foreign affairs. In order to increase his odds of winning the 2024 presidential election, the president needs to gain more support and improve his popularity by employing more informed domestic and foreign policies.

Arab News

US Navy is preparing for war in the Persian Gulf

David Axe

TWENTY times in the past three years, Iranian forces have tried to board foreign-flagged commercial vessels sailing through the narrow Strait of Hormuz into or out of the Persian Gulf. And twice in the span of just a couple weeks this spring, they succeeded - seizing one vessel whose crew they accused of colliding with an Iranian vessel, and another they claimed was involved in a legal dispute in Iran.

This could end badly ... for the Iranians. It's happened before. After Iranian gunboats opened fire on the Bahamas-flagged tanker Richmond Voyager on July 5, the Pentagon finally lost patience. It announced it would deploy a destroyer and F-16 and F-35 fighters to reinforce US forces - including F-22 stealth fighters and a pair of destroyers - already in the

Middle East. The extra forces would "defend US interests and safeguard freedom of navigation in the region," Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said. If all this seems familiar, it's because it is. Iranian forces have harassed Persian Gulf shipping off and on for decades. More than once, the harassment - and the American response - have escalated into open air and naval warfare. Each time, it was a disaster for Tehran.

In 1987, the United States approved Kuwait's request to reflag its tankers as American vessels, in order to give the US Navy legal cover as its warships escorted the tankers through the Persian Gulf and past Iran's own forces. The American operation, lasting from July 1987 to September 1988, included several smaller efforts that resulted in the destruction

of Iranian forces and the partial dismantling of Tehran's fleet. The Navy converted two oil barges into floating bases for Special Operations Forces, and the US Army embarked attack helicopters aboard Navy ships. On Sept. 21, the helicopters attacked an Iranian vessel seeding the Persian Gulf with explosive mines, forcing the crew to abandon ship. A few days later, the helicopters zeroed in on three Iranian patrol boats the Americans suspected of setting up a tanker attack. The boats opened fire and the helicopters fired back, sinking all three.

Seventeen months later on Oct. 16, 1987, an Iranian missile struck a Kuwaiti tanker, injuring 19 people. In retaliation, four American destroyers set ablaze two old oil platforms that Iranian forces were

using as bases for armed speedboats. The bloodiest fighting occurred six months later. On April 14, 1988, an American frigate struck an Iranian mine while escorting tankers through the Persian Gulf. The aircraft carrier USS Enterprise led a powerful retaliatory attack. Two US destroyers and an amphibious assault ship carrying a battalion of Marines assaulted an oil platform the Iranians were using as a base. Iranian speedboats then raided three civilian cargo ships. As the Iranians withdrew, Enterprise's bombers chased after them, sinking one speedboat with cluster bombs.

When an Iranian missile boat fired a Harpoon anti-ship missile at a group of American warships - and missed - the Americans fired back with their own Harpoons then closed on the damaged boat, sinking

it with their guns. Planes from Enterprise used Harpoons and laser-guided bombs to sink one Iranian corvette and badly damage another. At least 56 Iranians died in the fighting. Two US Marines perished when their helicopter crashed. Battered, the Iranian military pulled back. Iran has also sought at times to restrict the flow of oil by less overt means. Six tankers were attacked using limpet mines and other relatively clandestine methods in 2019. There were also overt seizures by the Iranians that year. On that occasion there were no reports of US military retaliation, but it may have occurred: Operation Prime Chance, the secret part of US operations in the 1980s, did not become known until some time later. Meanwhile the Iranian military are back again, openly in action. But the years haven't been kind to the two Iranian

fleets - the regular navy and the maritime arm of the sectarian Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps. They mostly still go to sea in the same speedboats and lightly-armed corvettes they had in the 1980s.

US forces hugely outnumbered Iranian forces four decades ago and the mismatch is no less dramatic today. In addition to the three destroyers, F-16s and stealthy F-22s and F-35s, American assets in the region include a 760-foot former oil tanker that the Navy has converted into a floating base for Special Operations Forces and helicopters. If the current spasm of maritime harassment escalates to open warfare, as it has in the past, expect the same outcome as in 1987 and 1988: burning and sinking Iranian ships and platforms and a lot of dead Iranians. Some regimes never learn.

Pros and cons of UK’s decision to join trans-Pacific trade bloc

EACH week brings new challenges for Rishi Sunak's beleaguered UK government, so it is little surprise that it has leapt upon the news that the nation has formally acceded to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership. On the face of it, the deal appears to be a boon for the UK, as it joins a trade agreement that covers about 500 million people across 11 other nations, accounting for about 13 percent of the world's gross domestic product. It joins Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam in signing up to the bloc. The UK is the first European country to join and it will be the pact's second-biggest economy behind Japan.

Already, CPTPP-based businesses employ about 400,000 people across the UK. Downing Street asserts that such companies punch well above their weight economically, as, while they account for just 0.3 percent of all UK businesses, they generate 6.1 percent of the country's total turnover. The government also argues that, unlike the EU, the CPTPP is neither a single market nor a customs union. So, countries are not required to have identical standards - a fact that concerns UK trade unions, which highlight threats to workers' rights, public services and democratic decision-making that they believe puts many jobs at risk.

Another key challenge for

Prime Minister Sunak in seeking to sell the deal is that, while the market opportunity may be significant in the longer term, even his government's own assessment declares that the economic gains for the UK will be small to begin with - only about 0.08 percent of GDP over 10 years. To put this another way, all the CPTPP nations combined accounted for 8 percent of UK exports in 2019 - less than the amount sold to Germany alone. The potential immediate opportunities for the UK when it formally begins to trade with the CPTPP nations under the new terms will be country and sector-specific. For example, Brunei and Malaysia - which currently account for less than 0.5 percent of total UK trade - are the two nations in the club that the UK does not have an existing trade deal with.

On the sectoral side, it is anticipated that dairy producers will gain export opportunities to Canada, Chile, Japan and Mexico, while beef, pork and poultry producers will get better access to Mexico's market. Moreover, the provisions could also help UK producers of items such as machinery and medicines - among the country's most-valuable exports to the bloc - by allowing them to expand supply chains across member countries. According to the British Chambers of Commerce, the CPTPP could have the most relevance for small and medium-sized UK businesses to build effi-

ciencies by importing components from member countries to then use in manufactured goods for export. There are also enhanced terms for data flows, which underpin an increasing part of international trade. Beneficial as this will be for some firms, UK think tank Chatham House has highlighted that the economic benefits of joining are muted because the country already has bilateral free trade agreements with nine of the 11 CPTPP members. Moreover, it makes the point that the deal will not nearly compensate for the cost of loss trade from leaving the EU.

Optimists like Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch, however, state that CPTPP is akin to a startup and the current estimates do not account for the fact that some members - for example, Vietnam - are rapidly growing in importance in global trade. She also flags that a key perk of the new deal is greater access to all CPTPP markets, including a pledge to eliminate or reduce 95 percent of import charges or tariffs. But what this highlights is how much of the potential benefits of joining rest on currently unquantifiable future gains if the UK can redirect its trade patterns more toward the Asia-Pacific, which is forecast to account for at least 50 percent of global growth between now and 2035. This could happen but there are no guarantees of success. One big prize would come if the US were to reverse the decision made by former President Donald

Trump not to sign up. The US purchases about double the amount of UK exports than all the current CPTPP nations put together, but its membership will either have to wait for a second term for President Joe Biden or a successor in the White House.

The fanfare greeting the signing of the deal therefore rests on much speculation about what the future impact of the deal will be and which new countries may join, underlining the significant challenges and opportunities the UK faces in the coming years on the trade front. While the nation has formidable, continuing strengths as one of the world's largest economies, some Brexiters were too optimistic prior to the referendum about the range of new deals that could be negotiated in the first few years after leaving the EU. There was even talk of London unlocking a new era of global trade in the 2020s, including the swift negotiation of very favorable bilateral trade deals with the world's two largest economies, the US and China. However, such ambitions have been muted by the reality of the UK's limited bargaining power in a world shaped by global economic superpowers. The CPTPP therefore represents a significant long-term gamble for the country. With only a marginal impact expected in the short and medium terms, the success of the deal will rest on issues like whether UK worker rights can be safeguarded and how much British firms can redirect their trade patterns toward the Asia-Pacific and the Americas in the decades ahead.

In tough times, Russia turns to a Cold War comrade

Jeremi Suri

AFTER decades of somewhat distant relations, Russia and Cuba are working closely together again - this time, as part of Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine. Starting around the anniversary of the invasion in February 2023, high-level Russian officials began a steady stream of public visits to Cuba. Barely a month went by without a high-profile Russia-Cuba visit.

In March, Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Russian Security Council and Igor Sechin, the powerful director of the Russian state oil company, Rosneft, met with leaders in Havana. Then, in April, Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, visited the island as part of a regional tour that included two other American adversaries - Venezuela and Nicaragua.

The visits went both ways. In June, Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz visited Russia for more than ten days, including a meeting with Putin. Alvaro Lopez Miera, the Cuban defense minister, traveled to Moscow near the end of the month for discussions with his Russian counterparts - including Sergei Shoigu, one of the notorious architects of the war in Ukraine. Shoigu announced that "Cuba has been and remains Russia's most important ally in the [Caribbean] region."

Shoigu promised that Moscow was "ready to render assistance to the island of freedom and to lend a shoulder to our Cuban friends." Likewise, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Gerardo Penalver described the two countries as "strategic allies" cooperating against "unilateral coercive measures" from Washington.

This was more than rhetoric. Russia pledged to give oil and various industrial supplies to Cuba. By one estimate, Moscow has already sent the island more than \$160 million worth of oil this year. And Russian news agencies announced that additional supplies will follow. Cuba now receives direct flights from Russia (flights had been suspended after the invasion of Ukraine), and it has joined the 'Mir' payment system that Moscow created to facilitate the conversion of rubles to pesos and other currencies for tourism, trade and aid. Over 1,000 Russian oil executives and staff are expected to be on the visit Cuba by year's end. Military assistance has followed. Earlier this month, the Russian naval ship, Perekop, diverted to Cuba from the country's Baltic Sea fleet more than 7,000 miles away. The ship carried approximately 100 Russian naval cadets, humanitarian assistance and various equipment to Cuba.

The Russian ambassador and the deputy commander of the Russian Navy attended the ship's elaborate arrival ceremony, symbolizing that this was the beginning of deeper collaboration. Military ties between Moscow and Havana are clearly designed to challenge the US, to show what Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has called "unconditional support" for Russia's "clash with the West." Although the Obama administration began to open relations with Cuba in 2014, the Trump and Biden administrations have returned to isolating the regime, emphasizing conflict over cooperation. In addition to deepened connections with Russia, Cuba has allowed China to build a secret espionage facility on the island. The Chinese base is part of what the US intelligence community identifies as a wider Chinese effort to intercept American communications, steal secrets and prepare for increased competition. It is also reminiscent of the Lourdes signals intelligence facility, a listening post built by the Soviets and then mothballed by Russia in the early 2000s. These provocations from Russia, China and Cuba have already elicited a strong response from the Pentagon. As the Russian ship sailed to Cuba the US sent a nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Pasadena, to the American-held base at Guantanamo Bay.

Officially a "logistics stop," this was a warning and a show of strength. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the submarine visit as a "provocative escalation." The US Navy said the move was "not without precedent." Both sides are correct. Russia and the US have entered an escalation spiral around Cuba: Putin is expanding Russian military activities near the US in response to what he views as a threatening American-armed presence near his borders, and Washington is responding by flexing its far larger muscles in the Caribbean. The White House wants the Kremlin (and China) to recognize that they must limit their support for Cuba and respect American interests.

This tit-for-tat dynamic threatens rapid disaster. That was the case, of course, in the early 1960s. Fearing military encirclement and isolation from the West, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev turned to Cuba as a convenient pressure point against Washington. Khrushchev hoped to bully former President John F. Kennedy into backing away from supporting anti-communist efforts in West Berlin and other parts of Europe. Khrushchev believed deploying nuclear-armed short-range missiles to Cuba would convince the American president that it was too risky to challenge Soviet power in other regions.

Putin is likely to believe similar things today. And he is also mistaken. When the White House learned of Moscow's escalation in October 1962, President Kennedy and his advisers immediately reacted with force - a naval quarantine of Cuba and preparations to launch an attack on the island if the missiles were not removed immediately. Fast forward six decades and President Biden and his advisers are likely to undertake similar responses if they learn of continued Russian military escalation

tional support" for Russia's "clash with the West." Although the Obama administration began to open relations with Cuba in 2014, the Trump and Biden administrations have returned to isolating the regime, emphasizing conflict over cooperation. In addition to deepened connections with Russia, Cuba has allowed China to build a secret espionage facility on the island. The Chinese base is part of what the US intelligence community identifies as a wider Chinese effort to intercept American communications, steal secrets and prepare for increased competition. It is also reminiscent of the Lourdes signals intelligence facility, a listening post built by the Soviets and then mothballed by Russia in the early 2000s. These provocations from Russia, China and Cuba have already elicited a strong response from the Pentagon. As the Russian ship sailed to Cuba the US sent a nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Pasadena, to the American-held base at Guantanamo Bay.

Officially a "logistics stop," this was a warning and a show of strength. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the submarine visit as a "provocative escalation." The US Navy said the move was "not without precedent." Both sides are correct. Russia and the US have entered an escalation spiral around Cuba: Putin is expanding Russian military activities near the US in response to what he views as a threatening American-armed presence near his borders, and Washington is responding by flexing its far larger muscles in the Caribbean. The White House wants the Kremlin (and China) to recognize that they must limit their support for Cuba and respect American interests.

This tit-for-tat dynamic threatens rapid disaster. That was the case, of course, in the early 1960s. Fearing military encirclement and isolation from the West, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev turned to Cuba as a convenient pressure point against Washington. Khrushchev hoped to bully former President John F. Kennedy into backing away from supporting anti-communist efforts in West Berlin and other parts of Europe. Khrushchev believed deploying nuclear-armed short-range missiles to Cuba would convince the American president that it was too risky to challenge Soviet power in other regions.

Putin is likely to believe similar things today. And he is also mistaken. When the White House learned of Moscow's escalation in October 1962, President Kennedy and his advisers immediately reacted with force - a naval quarantine of Cuba and preparations to launch an attack on the island if the missiles were not removed immediately. Fast forward six decades and President Biden and his advisers are likely to undertake similar responses if they learn of continued Russian military escalation

south of Florida. The current national security strategy includes a commitment to prevent foreign interference in the region. As in October 1962, the US and Russia could find themselves straying close to direct military confrontation around Cuba in late 2023 or early 2024.

The more desperate Putin grows in Ukraine, the more he will challenge the US in the Caribbean. The opportunity is too tempting for a dictator - Khrushchev or Putin - looking to dissuade American commitments in Europe. The more the Biden administration feels challenged by Russia and China in Cuba, the more it will want to show strength. Washington will respond to Russian military escalation in Cuba with its own escalating force, as it already has done with the recent deployment of a nuclear submarine. In a presidential election year, the pressures for muscle-flexing will only increase, especially as the searing images of American deaths during the Afghanistan withdrawal in 2021 are exploited by Biden's Republican opponents. How can Washington avoid this escalation trap? President Biden and his advisers must act decisively, as Kennedy's team did in October 1962, to reverse Russian temptations in Cuba and China's opportunism. The administration must send a clear message that foreign military intervention in the region will only harden American commitments in both Europe and the Caribbean. Biden must show that he will act in disciplined ways to limit Russian and Chinese access, including stopping foreign ships, where necessary and lawful according to existing sanctions.

The president must also offer Putin incentives to back down in Cuba, as Kennedy did with Khrushchev. In 1962, the US publicly pledged not to invade Cuba and it secretly agreed to remove aging "Jupiter" missiles from Turkey, after Russia withdrew its Cuban missiles. In 2023, the US should reaffirm its commitment to avoid direct assaults on Russian sovereign territory, despite continued American military support for Ukraine, and Washington should quietly pursue talks with Moscow aimed at a peaceful withdrawal of Russian forces from all of Ukraine. The US should deter Putin's escalation and encourage his restraint. It should actively disrupt Chinese espionage activities in the Caribbean.

The history of events 60 years ago shows that there is a strong imperative to avoid miscalculation, before it is too late. Military escalation around Cuba is a dangerous temptation for Russia and a difficult trap for the US. Kennedy's actions did not end the Cold War after the Cuban Missile Crisis, but they set guidelines for stable Russian-American relations around the island that lasted to the end of the 20th century. President Biden must do the same, before we find ourselves in yet another Cuban crisis.

CNN

Humanitarian system under strain as Sudan’s refugee crisis intensifies

Michael Jennings

IT has been nearly three months since fighting broke out in Khartoum between two forces vying for power within Sudan: the Rapid Support Forces under the leadership of Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti); and the Sudanese armed forces under Abdul-Fattah Al Burhan. As the violence spread out from the capital, especially to Darfur region, hundreds of thousands have sought to escape across the borders into neighbouring countries like Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

Since the fighting started, around 645,000 people have left Sudan and sought sanctuary elsewhere, and a further 2.2 million people have been forcibly displaced within the country. These numbers include not only Sudanese nationals, but also people who themselves had been refugees within Sudan, having fled conflicts in their own countries, now forced to move once again in the face of violence.

Alongside the individual human tragedies of people being forced to flee with what few belongings can be quickly packed and loaded into a car (for the lucky few), a crowded bus for others, and carried by those having to march long distances to safety, there are wider implications for regional security and the humanitarian system as a whole. Even before this latest crisis, the humanitarian system was at breaking point. Numbers of those requiring assistance are

growing rapidly, while at the same time the gap between funding pledged and that required is widening. When there is already a \$22 billion overall gap between UN calls for assistance and what has been provided, its call for \$3 billion to be made available this year to provide support for the hundreds of thousands on the move in and out of Sudan looks very unlikely to be met. The key donors are distracted.

Europe is focused largely on the crisis in Ukraine and to a lesser extent (in the south) on how it responds to migration across the Mediterranean. Turkey, a key regional player, is now also coping with its own tragedy, the February earthquake. The United States is increasingly distracted by the campaigning for the 2024 presidential elections, the outcome of which will determine how far it responds to crises and disasters outside areas of its own economic interest.

The countries to which the majority of refugees have fled - South Sudan and Chad - must therefore bear the costs of responding to their needs from their own limited and stretched humanitarian resources. Rains are making the border areas where many have temporarily settled less accessible. The large numbers of refugees and others requiring humanitarian assistance are making this challenge harder. These countries were

already struggling with their own humanitarian crises. Chad hosts more than a million refugees, and in South Sudan the UN had estimated that 9.4 million people would require humanitarian assistance this year, even before the latest refugee influx.

Without new funding and support, there is a very real danger that humanitarian organisations and host countries will not be able to cope, leaving thousands of already vulnerable people alone and without support. Large-scale movements of people fleeing conflict already have a long legacy of creating new tensions and potential flash points for conflict in the region. Tensions raised by the economic impact of hosting large numbers of forcibly displaced persons if donors fail to step up, will be compounded by the increased competition for scarce resources (land, water, funds), especially coming as it does after one of the most serious and prolonged droughts in the region's recent history.

The region is home to some of the world's poorest countries, whose landlocked economies are already facing disruption in the vital access they need to Sudan's ports. Now that they are being forced to bear the burden of supporting large numbers of new arrivals, there is a very real risk that the refugee crisis will create new tensions, which could escalate regional insecurity far beyond Sudan's own borders.

At the global level, any large-scale movement of people, especially if the crisis is not ended soon, risks undermining the international norms and conventions around the treatment of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. We have already seen this in action, with the closing of borders and policing of seas in response to the conflict in Syria. As larger numbers attempted to flee that violence from 2011, European countries and institutions erected tougher physical and legal barriers, undermining the responsibilities governments hold for responding to the needs of those trying to escape harm.

There is a real danger that, should those fleeing violence in Sudan, come up against the hard borders of Europe, its politicians will seek to undermine and change the 1951 Refugee Convention and subsequent international laws. In the US, a Republican Party still under the sway of Donald Trump and his nationalist politics could use this crisis and the calls for significant funding to demand further cuts to overseas aid budgets (including humanitarian). With a system already threatened by underfunding and efforts to evade and redefine responsibilities, the hundreds of thousands made vulnerable in this latest crisis, and those who will follow in subsequent ones, will be left more vulnerable, more marginalised, and more subject to the violence they are seeking to escape.

Gulf News

Congress should support in vestment in US, not discourage it

Jason D. Greenblatt

AT what point do Americans get to ask members of the US Congress why they keep spending our hard-earned money on political gamesmanship? In June, the PGA Tour, DP World Tour and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, which owns and operates LIV Golf, shocked the sports world when they announced their merger.

There has been strong criticism of the merger from some in the US. One complaint is that the negotiations were shrouded in secrecy. But for anyone who has ever conducted a complex, sensitive transaction, secret negotiations are no surprise at all. In business, announcements are often made only after a deal is completed, not before. Another criticism, this one leveled at the PGA, is that the PGA has abandoned the 9/11 families it brought in to help in the fight against LIV Golf to begin with. That is totally fair, but does this mean the PGA is forever frozen into the positions it took a year or more ago, when the PGA wanted to shut down LIV Golf? The PGA made a big mistake in using 9/11 families in its fight with LIV Golf to start with. To involve the sport of golf and entities which were not established or in power back then was a political move, one made at the expense of families who have suffered enough.

It is understandable that the reversal is bitterly disappointing to these families, but ultimately the PGA realized it would lose its fight with LIV Golf and made the choice to stay alive. Then there is

the "sportswashing" claim. If you follow that claim to its logical conclusion, we would have to end relationships with many countries around the world. Imagine what that approach would do to the US economy. Just for context, US trade with China exceeds \$690 billion.

Moreover, the eye-popping reforms being implemented in Saudi Arabia are having an incalculable, positive impact on Saudi citizens and residents, the broader Middle East and beyond. This should be encouraged, not discouraged. We should remember that, only a few years ago, we were criticizing Saudi Arabia for not being more open, for not allowing women to compete in sports and for not doing enough to stand up to extremist agendas, among other criticisms. The same arguments apply to those criticizing the deal because of what they say are human rights issues. Do we expect Saudi Arabia and all of our friends and allies to be just like America before we do business with them? Of course not. We must engage with them and seek to keep improving things. But we do not cut ties because there is real work to be done. We should recognize that there has been and continues to be real work being done on that front in the Kingdom.

If the sportswashing and human rights activists are consistent with their arguments, they would likely demand that we stop every deal between the Kingdom and the US. That

would include the \$37 billion deal the Kingdom and Boeing recently inked, the tens of billions of dollars PIF holds in US stock, and the more than \$55 billion of trade and investment between the US and Saudi Arabia, to name just a few. What do these activists think stopping this activity would do to the US economy, and to US jobs? Which brings me to the criticism coming from Capitol Hill. Last week, the Senate Homeland Security Committee's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held a three-hour hearing on the PGA Tour's planned merger with LIV Golf.

The chairman of the panel, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a frequent critic of Saudi Arabia, voiced the most criticism. Blumenthal dressed up his disdain for the Kingdom by couching the transaction in "national security terms." He added that the hearing was about much more than the game of golf, which he described as a "cherished American institution."

Golf is certainly popular in the US. According to the PGA, roughly one in seven Americans played golf in 2022, resulting in \$101.7 billion in direct economic impact. But is golf so cherished that we will sportswash away its dirty little secrets? The Masters Tournament, first played in 1934, did not invite a Black competitor until 1975. The famed Augusta National did not admit its first Black member until 1990 and membership to women was not available until 2012. For many

years, neither Blumenthal nor I, both Jewish Americans, would have been allowed to be members of Augusta National. Imagine if, during those years, US allies and partners had limited investment from America or stopped working with the country because of those policies or any US government policies they disagreed with. Imagine the impact on the US economy and our national security if our allies and partners wanted to cut business ties and investment over various American policies today.

We should approach foreign policy with humility and, most importantly, acknowledge that we are not perfect ourselves. We are all a work in progress and always will be. We should use business opportunities, sports, culture, tourism and other ties as a way to discuss our differences with an outstretched hand and open heart, and use those opportunities to build bridges and bridge gaps.

If Blumenthal has an actual national security concern, he should articulate it. I heard no such concern articulated. The Kingdom's transformation is too important for the national security of the US and the people of Saudi Arabia, and Congress should be strongly supporting our ties, not discouraging them. Investigations like this will have a chilling effect on foreign investment in the US. The investigation is a waste of American taxpayers' money and our senators' time would be better spent on real issues that affect the US. Sadly, there are many of those today.

years, neither Blumenthal nor I, both Jewish Americans, would have been allowed to be members of Augusta National. Imagine if, during those years, US allies and partners had limited investment from America or stopped working with the country because of those policies or any US government policies they disagreed with. Imagine the impact on the US economy and our national security if our allies and partners wanted to cut business ties and investment over various American policies today.

We should approach foreign policy with humility and, most importantly, acknowledge that we are not perfect ourselves. We are all a work in progress and always will be. We should use business opportunities, sports, culture, tourism and other ties as a way to discuss our differences with an outstretched hand and open heart, and use those opportunities to build bridges and bridge gaps.

If Blumenthal has an actual national security concern, he should articulate it. I heard no such concern articulated. The Kingdom's transformation is too important for the national security of the US and the people of Saudi Arabia, and Congress should be strongly supporting our ties, not discouraging them. Investigations like this will have a chilling effect on foreign investment in the US. The investigation is a waste of American taxpayers' money and our senators' time would be better spent on real issues that affect the US. Sadly, there are many of those today.

AFTER the summit of the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States concluded in Brussels on Tuesday, the EU said that it took note of the CELAC's historical position regarding the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands between Argentina and the United Kingdom.

The two sides also reaffirmed their fundamental commitment to all the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign equality of all states and respect for their territorial integrity, and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

Buenos Aires welcomed that and called it a "diplomatic victory" of Argentina, saying that Argentina has made one stride closer to its objective of resuming sovereignty over the islands. This is the first time the EU has showed its stance on the issue since Brexit in 2020. The EU referred to the islands as its "overseas territory" before 2020. It is predictable that Buenos Aires hopes to have further dialogue with the EU on the issue in the future in a bid to strive for more support for its resumption of sovereignty over the islands.

Although the UK, which controlled the islands after a war in 1982 with Argentina, reached an agreement with Argentina in 2016 on the joint development of the resources related to the islands, that did not serve to put an end to their sovereignty dispute on the isles, and

Li Yang

matic victory" of Argentina, saying that Argentina has made one stride closer to its objective of resuming sovereignty over the islands. This is the first time the EU has showed its stance on the issue since Brexit in 2020. The EU referred to the islands as its "overseas territory" before 2020. It is predictable that Buenos Aires hopes to have further dialogue with the EU on the issue in the future in a bid to strive for more support for its resumption of sovereignty over the islands.

Although the UK, which controlled the islands after a war in 1982 with Argentina, reached an agreement with Argentina in 2016 on the joint development of the resources related to the islands, that did not serve to put an end to their sovereignty dispute on the isles, and

Argentina subsequently withdrew from the deal. The UK has always turned a deaf ear to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization appealing to it and Argentina to resume negotiations and resolve the sovereignty dispute over the islands by peaceful means. And the UN has reaffirmed many times over the past decades that the question of the islands can be resolved only through peaceful negotiations. China firmly supports Argentina's legitimate claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK should set an example in abiding by the spirit of the UN Charter and UN resolutions. The sovereignty of the islands is decided by history rather than the UK's success in a robbery.



Govt demanded to withdraw high taxes on real estate sector

ISLAMABAD (INP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the construction and real estate sector was the backbone of the economy as it facilitates the growth of over 70 allied industries, generates economic activities, attracts investment and creates plenty of new jobs. However, the government in the budget 23-24 has imposed high taxes on the real estate sector that would destroy property businesses and ultimately retard the overall growth of the economy.

While addressing a seminar on tax issues of real estate sector organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA) and Federal of Realtors Pakistan (FORP) here on Saturday, he said that the government should urgent-

ly engage realtors in consultation and rationalize high taxes on this important sector to save the businesses and the economy from their destructive consequences.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that many businesses from real estate sectors have already closed down due to high tax rates and if these taxes were not revised, more businesses would face closure.

He said that instead of imposing high taxes, the government should provide attractive incentives to the construction and real estate sector that would bring more investment to the country and help in early revival of the economy.

He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with IEAA and FORP in their efforts for resolving tax issues.

Speaking on the occasion, President, Islamabad

Estate Agents Association and President, Federation of Pakistan Realtors, Sardar Tahir Mehmood highlighted the major tax issues of the real estate sector. He said that the 1% tax on deemed income of immovable assets under Sec-7E entails destructive consequences for the real estate and property sector and urged that the government should immediately withdraw this tax to save the real estate businesses from collapse.

He said that the WHT on filer buyers and sellers has been raised from 2% to 3% while on non-filer buyers, it has been from 7% to 10.5% and on non-filer sellers from 4% to 6%.

He said that these tax measures would have counterproductive impact as they would promote tax evasion instead of improving the tax revenue for the country.

He cautioned that if the government did not revise high taxes on the real estate sector, the realtors would launch a strong protest against such coercive tax measures.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI & CEO Centaurus, Musarrat Ejaz Khan Chairman Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Abid Khan Chairman IEAA, Ch. Zahid Rafiq Secretary General IEAA, Ch. Masood & Ch. Abdul Rauf former Presidents IEAA, Malik Rahid Tufail, Rana Arshad and others also spoke on the occasion and called upon the government to withdraw high taxes on the real estate sector to save the economy from further troubles.



ISLAMABAD: Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Aamir Hayat CEO PIAC meeting with Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar.

Gold rates decline by Rs100 to 222,800

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs100 and was sold at Rs222,800 on Saturday against its sale at Rs222,900 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs85 to Rs191,015 from Rs191,100 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs175,097 from Rs175,176, all Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,750 and Rs2357.68 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$4 to \$1,962 from \$1,966, the association reported.

SCCI chief chairs meeting of EPZ investors

SIALKOT (APP): President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik chaired a meeting of the Sialkot Export Processing Zone (EPZ) investors to address the issue of cancellation of plots and a plan for the future.

The meeting's highlights included success in stopping the auction and obtaining an extended construction time-frame from the provincial government.

Investors were instructed to submit their project proposals and construction drawings within three months, with a one-year deadline for facility establishment. Further extensions from the government would not be granted, except for ongoing construction cases, considered on a case-by-case basis.

To facilitate the process, a facilitation desk would be set up at Sialkot Chamber to assist the EPZ investors with submitting their documents to the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC).

DG Naval Intelligence calls on Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General of Naval Intelligence Rear Admiral Rizwan Ahmad called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

He extended an invitation on behalf of the Naval Chief to Finance Minister to visit Naval Head Quarters, which the minister accepted, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Rear Admiral commended the efforts of the Finance Minister in getting the country out of economic difficulties and setting it again on the growth path.

Finance Minister also lauded the role of the Pakistan Navy in safeguarding the maritime interests of Pakistan.

CEO PIA calls on Finance Minister

Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here on Saturday expressed the firm commitment of the government to provide maximum support to Pakistan

International Airlines (PIA) for the improvement of its services in order to make it a profit-oriented entity for the country.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PIA Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Amir Hayat met with Finance Minister and discussed matters related to PIA, besides requesting further financial support from the government.

The Finance Minister expressed his commitment to provide maximum support for the improvement of PIA and also indicated full support from Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique to improve PIA's performance and start PIA flights to Europe as soon as possible.

Finance Minister dispels impression to impose a new tax on agri, construction sectors

Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here Saturday categorically cleared that the govern-

ment had not imposed any new tax on agriculture and construction sectors under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement.

On his Twitter handle account, the minister said that he gave a recent explanatory statement in the National Assembly (NA) which was meant to dispel the impression that the government would impose new taxes on the agriculture and construction sectors under the IMF agreement.

"This explanatory statement is being misinterpreted. I make it clear again that the tax measures mentioned in the Letter of Intent are those that have been implemented in the country till June 30," he added.

Finance Minister further said, "Apart from this, no new tax is being imposed, adding that it is also clarified that no federal tax has been imposed or will be imposed on agricultural income."

SECP, PTA foster collaboration for a safer digital ecosystem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Akif Saeed on Saturday held a meeting with the Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, HI (M), aimed at fostering effective collaboration and exploring areas of mutual interest between the two institutions.

The high-level meeting witnessed constructive discussions and deliberations on several key areas of mutual interest. Both organizations firmly expressed their commit-

ment to enhancing collaboration to make Pakistan's digital/cyber landscape more secure.

Recognizing the significance of joint efforts, it was agreed that SECP and PTA will formalize their collaboration through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU will lay a foundation for future collaborative initiatives, strategically aimed at fortifying the regulatory framework and effectively dealing with issues falling within their respective regulatory space.

Specific to illegal lending Apps it was agreed to

set up a joint monitoring and reporting mechanism for ensuring appropriate and timely action.

The Chairman SECP apprised his counterpart about the SECP framework for digital lending apps and the envisioned role of cyber security auditors to certify the confidentiality and security requirements of digital apps. It was informed that the SECP publishes a White list on its website for validating the legal status of digital lending apps operating in Pakistan.

Akif informed the Chairman PTA that, in light of the growing digitization

in the corporate and financial sectors, SECP was building a cyber security framework and would share it with PTA for feedback.

The Chairman PTA appreciated SECP's extensive regulatory framework for lending Apps, especially highlighting the importance of data localization measures.

Both regulators agreed to launch a joint awareness campaign in Pakistan to raise awareness about illegal digital lending app risks. This regular feature aims to protect the public from potential fraudulent practices.

Tripartite railway project to reduce Pak-Uzbek cargo time by five days

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has said that the 760-kilometre tripartite railroad agreement inked between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan is expected to reduce delivery times of cargo between Uzbekistan and Pakistan by about five days.

While talking to media on Saturday, the PBF spokesperson Zainab Jatoi said that it was matter of extraordinary accomplishment that Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan have marked a joint convention to lay out a rail connect that would assist with interfacing Pakistan with Central Asia and Russia via Termez city in

southern Uzbekistan hailing the improvement as a "unique advantage" for the district.

She termed it a new rail economic corridor which to tap the potential of this region will pass through Termez, Mazar-i-Sharif and Logar in Afghanistan, and extend till the Kharlachi border crossing in Pakistan's northwestern Kurram tribal district.

The line would support both passenger and freight services, and contribute to regional trade and economic growth, according to PBF.

"The project will help connect Central Asia and Russia with Pakistan. This railway track will be a

game changer."

Zainab Kausar Jatoi further said the "monumental achievement" reflected their commitment to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance relations. The PBF thanked the Government of Pakistan and Minister for Railways.

According to PBF spokesperson, currently most trade between Europe and South Asia was dependent on sea routes, which could be susceptible to geopolitical tensions and maritime piracy. "A railway link could provide an alternative and more secure trade route, reducing dependence on traditional sea lanes and bringing down the cost," she

added.

She also stated that the construction and operation of the railway link would generate employment opportunities in various sectors, including construction, logistics, and services, leading to a positive impact on the local workforce.

As the Landlocked Afghanistan generally depends on Pakistan for exchange, while Islamabad has of late been hoping to help its exchange attaches with Central Asia and Russia.

This month marked the first time a truck carrying Russian export goods arrived in Pakistan as part of an agreement between the two nations. The improvement came days after Islamabad got a second freight of limited unrefined petroleum from Moscow.

Last month, a transfer of 21 trucks conveying melted oil gas (LPG) from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan arrived at Pakistan through the Torkham line crossing, as per Pakistani traditions authorities. The LPG orders began showing up soon after the primary freight of limited Russian unrefined petroleum showed up in Karachi in June, she told.

Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover exceeded

TASHKENT (APP): Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover has exceeded 29 billion US dollars from January to June this year, the country's Statistics Agency said.

According to the data, the indicator increased by 4.7 billion dollars or 19.4 percent year on year. The country's exports and imports reached 12.1 billion dollars and 17 billion dollars respectively.

Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover amounted to 50 billion dollars in 2022.

Last year, Russia, China and Kazakhstan are among the country's major trading partners.

China's service outsourcing industry sees steady growth

BEIJING (APP): China's service outsourcing industry saw steady expansion in the first half of this year, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Chinese firms inked service outsourcing contracts worth nearly 1.1 trillion yuan (about 153.9 billion US dollars) during the period, up 10.6 percent year on year.

The executed contract value stood at 740 billion yuan during this period, with a year-on-year increase of 14.7 percent.

Of the total, the value of offshore service outsourcing contracts rose 15.1 percent compared to the same period last year, reaching 630 billion yuan.

In terms of the executed contract value, offshore service outsourcing involving the United States, the European Union and members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership expanded 16.4 percent, 14.8 percent and 22.2 percent year on year, respectively, in the first six months of 2023.

In the January-June period, the industry brought in 330,000 new hires, with 73.2 percent of these individuals holding a university degree or

above.

Outsourcing refers to hiring an outside party to carry out services or produce goods typically undertaken by in-house employees.

China Construction Bank increases loan support for manufacturing

China Construction Bank, one of the country's largest state-owned commercial banks, has enhanced financial support for the manufacturing sector.

According to the bank, by the end of June, its outstanding loans to the manufacturing sector exceeded 2.7 trillion yuan (about 377.85 billion US dollars), expanding 21.4 percent compared with the same period last year.

The bank's outstanding medium and long-term loans to the manufacturing sector exceeded 1.36 trillion yuan at the end of June, rising 36.23 percent year on year.

To meet the financial needs of advanced manufacturing, strategic emerging industries and high-tech industries, the bank's outstanding loans to specialized and innovative firms increased 35 percent year on year to over 250 billion yuan during the period.

China's Guizhou sees 4.4 pct GDP growth in H1

The gross domestic product (GDP) of southwest China's Guizhou Province totaled 1.02 trillion yuan (about 143 billion US dollars) in the first half of 2023, up 4.4 percent year on year, according to local authorities.

In the first half of 2023, the value-added of the primary, secondary and tertiary industries of the province rose by 3.1 percent to 112.6 billion yuan, 4.7 percent to 383.4 billion yuan, and 4.4 percent to 525.9 billion yuan, respectively.

The GDP growth of Guizhou in the first half of 2023 is faster than the 2.5 percent growth in the first quarter of 2023 and the 1.2 percent growth achieved in the entire year of 2022, according to Wang Zhaoxue, deputy director of Guizhou provincial statistics bureau.

The province's economy in the second quarter maintained recovery and growth momentum, following the stable rebound in the first quarter.

The accumulation of further positive factors is bolstering the prospects for sustained high-quality development, Wang noted.

Farewell dinner organise in honor of Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): A farewell dinner was organised in honor of Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad by the Heads of all IRS Field Formations of the Karachi region.

The Chief Collectors (Customs) in Karachi also attended the event.

During the event, all

Heads of Field Formations expressed their gratitude to the Chairman FBR and shared their learnings and experiences of working under the leadership of the Chairman in different capacities, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The Chairman FBR expressed his gratitude to

the officers of the Karachi region for organizing the farewell dinner.

In his speech, he recalled his days spent in Karachi as a junior officer and the journey throughout his thirty years career. The hosts also presented the Chairman with mementos and souvenirs.

This was followed by a

dinner in which the Chairman FBR mingled with junior officers with whom he shared his experiences and wished them well for their future endeavors.

The event ended on a note of thanks by all officers of the Karachi region who wished the Chairman FBR a happy and healthy post-retirement life.

Global stocks mixed after tech drubbing

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stock markets wavered, a day after shares in major US tech firms took a beating and as investors brace for a week of interest rate decisions.

Following a mixed day on European and Asian bourses, Wall Street finished the week on a muted note. The Dow Jones Industrial Average eked out a tiny gain to climb for the 10th straight session for the first time since 2017.

But the Nasdaq again declined, albeit with a much smaller loss than Thursday's rout.

"There wasn't any concerted selling interest, but

there wasn't a lot of buying interest either as market participants looked ahead to a busy earnings reporting schedule next week," said Briefing.com, noting the coming reports from Google parent Alphabet, Microsoft and Meta Platforms, which owns Facebook.

With this week's focus on earnings, the market's response to results has been a "reflection of what's been priced in" to individual stocks, said Art Hogan of B. Riley Financial.

Both Tesla and Netflix were "priced for perfection" and stumbled after earnings that fell short, said

Hogan, pointing to Johnson & Johnson as a company that surged following results, in part due to a much lower valuation.

Besides earnings, next week's calendar includes a Federal Reserve policy meeting.

While the Fed is widely expected to hike interest rates, Hogan said the market could be "disrupted" if the US central bank is more hawkish than expected.

He noted that investors do not expect the Fed to raise rates again in September.

The European Central Bank and Bank of Japan are also holding monetary poli-

cy meetings next week.

On currency markets, the yen rallied briefly against the dollar after data showed Japanese inflation picked up speed in June, which some saw as putting further pressure on the Bank of Japan to tighten policy.

However, the yen later slid more than one percent as observers suggested the figures were unlikely to shift monetary policymakers from their ultra-loose stance.

The central bank is expected to stand pat at its meeting next week, after governor Kazuo Ueda's recent dovish comments.



In brief

Pak women's team to feature in Billie

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan women's team would be featured in the Billie Jean King Cup 2023 scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from July 22-28. Pakistan team proceeded to Kuala Lumpur to feature in the championship, said a press release on Saturday. The team includes Sara Mansoor (Non-playing Captain), Sara Ibrahim Khan, Ushna Sohail, Amna Ali Qayum and Meheq Khokhar. The President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, and the PTF Executive Committee have extended their best wishes for the team. They hope the team would display the best performance in the tournament with full zeal and enthusiasm. PTF President said the visit would once again give exposure to the women's team in an international event.

German CG honours Pak special athletes

KARACHI (APP): The national heroes who won the honours for Pakistan in the Special Olympic World Games played in Berlin, Germany recently, is being welcomed all over the country. In this regard, a special ceremony was organized in their honour by the German Consul General Dr. Rudiger Lotz in the German Consulate in Karachi to celebrate the athlete's victory in the World Games, said a press release issued here on Saturday. Medalists, unified partners, and coaches along with Special Olympic Pakistan Advisor Yasmin Haider, National Director Taha Tahir, Media Advisor Asif Azeem and National Sports Director Farkhunda Jabeen and other personalities attended the event. While delivering the welcome speech on this occasion, the host Consul General Dr. Rudiger Lotz said that the Special Olympics World Games hosted by Germany for the first time were held wonderfully and memorably in all respects in which six and a half thousand athletes from 176 countries participated. Pakistani athletes have won more than 80 gold medals in the World Games and have proved that when there is a determination to win and a strong belief in hard work, no difficulty or hurdle can stop them from achieving success.

Paris St-Germain criticised

PARIS (BBC): Paris St-Germain have been accused of "moral harassment" after leaving Kylian Mbappe out of their pre-season tour of Asia, and the French footballers' union said it could take legal action. PSG's all-time leading goalscorer has told the club he will not extend his contract, which has 12 months left. The club want to sell Mbappe, 24, now to get a fee but Mbappe plans to stay until the end of his deal. The France forward cost PSG £165.7m following his 2017 move from Monaco. After Mbappe was left out of the PSG squad going to Japan and South Korea, a National Union of Professional Footballers statement said: "These players must enjoy the same working conditions as the rest of the professional workforce." "The UNFP feels it would be useful to remind managers that putting pressure on an employee - via the deterioration of their working conditions, for example - to force them to leave or accept what the employer wants constitutes moral harassment, which French law firmly condemns.

Pakistan look to double up against Sri Lanka after year-long drought

COLOMBO (AFP/APP): Pakistan will look to use their newfound batting aggression to double up against Sri Lanka in the second Test starting Monday, after securing their first long-format victory for a year. The visitors arrived in Sri Lanka without a Test win to their name in 12 months but despite a wobbly final-innings chase a four-wicket victory in Galle means they need only a draw in Colombo to win the two-match series.

A determined effort to raise their run rate with a more positive approach paid dividends, scoring at

more than 4.5 per over for much of their first innings and putting the Sri Lankan bowlers under pressure.

It is an approach that has echoes of England's new "Bazball" style. The first hundred of Saud Shakeel's double century came off just 129 balls, his 177-run partnership with Agha Salman laying the foundation for Pakistan's 149-run first innings lead.

After the last Test cycle, Pakistan's management was "very firm" that one of the reasons they were not winning matches was that "we weren't scoring at such a high rate as

the opposition", Shan Masood said.

There had been a "concentrated effort" at pre-tour training camps in Lahore and Karachi, he added.

"The emphasis was on scoring runs just to sort of put the opposition under pressure," said Masood, who scored 39 off 30 balls in the first innings in Galle. "That has put us back in the game."

Pakistan may want to include another seamer as the Sinhalese Sports Club track is known to provide bounce and movement, but will have to consider whether to make changes to a winning side.

Prime Minister's Talent Hunt football Sports League starts

HYDERABAD (APP): Under the Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Sports League the provincial level football games has been started at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojani, the competitions will be held among male and female football teams of five divisions of the province, while a grand opening ceremony was held at Public School Hyderabad.

The football competition of talent hunt sports league is being organized by Sindh Agriculture University and IBA Sukkur in collaboration with Higher Education Commission. The male and female teams of Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana and Sukkur divisions of Sindh are competing for the title.

The ceremony was held at the football ground of Public School Hyderabad which was presided over by Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Marri, while Member of National Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary

Maritime and Affairs Engineer Sabir Hussain Qaim Khani was the chief guest. Addressing on the occasion, the vice chancellor said that Sindh Agriculture University had provided the best sports environment for students with better quality education, especially for female students, and provided many new opportunities for various indoor and outdoor games, adding "the role of the government and the Higher Education

Commission in this regard is commendable."

The VC said that the winning teams of the competition would compete at the national level, adding "We hope that many of these players will represent the country at the international level."

Qaim Khani said that there was a time when people considered it a defect to send their daughters to the sports field, but now it was a matter of honor to see equal representation of girls

in the competitions.

He said that the vice chancellor was a supporter of innovative academic, research and healthy activities for children and we hoped that the university would host many such activities in the future.

Director Sports Anwar Hussain Khanzada briefed the guests in detail about the league, while the support of HEC and Youth Sports League Secretary Sheeza Fatima was also lauded on the occasion.

A large number of students, guests and fans including Talent Hunt Sindh Brand Ambassador and International Footballer Saddam Hussain, National Football Selector Ghulam Sarwar Tedi, International Athlete Maryam Keerio, Abdul Wahid Baloch, Shahzaman, Tariq Baloch, Basharat Jatt, Asad Sheikh, Shaukat Hussain Sangi, Muhammad Umar Dasti and others were present during the event.

Inter Miami debut goal for Argentina star seals win over Cruz Azul

MIAMI (BBC): Argentina star Lionel Messi curled in a stunning stoppage-time free-kick on his Inter Miami debut to clinch a 2-1 victory against Mexican side Cruz Azul.

Messi, 36, struck in the fourth minute of added time as his Major League Soccer side won the Leagues Cup tie. The 20,000-capacity crowd included celebrities such as basketball's LeBron James, tennis legend Serena Williams and US TV star Kim Kardashian.

"We wanted to start like this by giving these people a victory," said Messi.

"We knew that it was very important for us to start this championship in winning fashion. Luckily we were able to do it in the end, and I am very happy."

Smoke bombs in Miami's pink colour were let off behind the goal at the DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale as some fans ran on to the pitch to celebrate Messi's goal, before being led away by security.

It continued the party

atmosphere started on Sunday, when Messi was officially unveiled to fans in front of another capacity crowd in south Florida.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner only trained with his team-mates for the first time on Tuesday after moving to the MLS following the end of his contract at Paris St-Germain.

Messi scored 32 goals in 75 games during a two-year spell with the French champions after leaving Barcelona, and turned down lucrative offers from other countries to play in the US. This was the first time he had turned out for a non-European club side, but was joined by a familiar face as he and former Barca team-mate Sergio Busquets came on as part of a 54th-minute triple substitution.

Spain defender Jordi Alba has also made the switch from the Nou Camp, and will be available to play against Atlanta United in the Leagues Cup on Tuesday. The cup competition between sides in the

MLS and Mexico's LIGA MX marks a fresh start for Inter Miami, who are bottom of the MLS table without a win in 11 games.

Messi was on his feet with the rest of the bench to celebrate Robert Taylor's 44th-minute opener for the home side, but Cruz Azul's Uriel Antuna had not read the script, cancelling out Inter Miami's lead with 25 minutes remaining.

But Argentina's World Cup winner provided the Hollywood ending as Messi was brought down by Carlos Salcedo for a free-kick just outside the box in the final seconds, in ideal range for his famous left foot. And he delivered perfectly, curling the ball high to the right of goalkeeper Andres Gudino and into the top corner. "It is a huge joy to get this first victory after how we have done in the league," Messi added. "It is important to start winning, beyond the fact that it is another championship, for confidence it is very good to get victories."

Successful second summer junior Squash Camp concludes at JSKSC Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The second summer junior squash camp on Saturday reached its successful conclusion at the Jan Sher Khan Squash Complex (KSKSC) Abbottabad. The event was graced by former Director-General of Sports, Tariq Mahmood, Coach Shakeel Khan, Rahmat Gul, and Dr Shakir Hafeez, who honoured the participants by distributing certificates.

The camp proved to be an excellent platform for nurturing young talent, with Coach Shakeel Khan dedicating special attention to the budding players and helping them improve their skills.

Tariq Mahmood, the President of the Regional Squash Association, used the occasion to impart valuable advice to the young athletes. He emphasized the importance of focusing on their skills, respecting the decisions of the umpires during matches, and improving their speed to carve a name for themselves in the world of squash. While talking to the media on the occasion, Tariq Mahmood stressed the sig-

nificance of collective efforts to promote squash at the national level. He highlighted the necessity of organizing numerous training camps and tournaments to provide opportunities for grooming young talents and fostering the sport's growth throughout the country.

The event witnessed a remarkable display of support from parents and well-wishers, who lauded the efforts of the Hazara Region Squash Association in organizing the successful camp.

As the camp came to an end, participants showcased their skills in an exciting match between Abbas and Abdullah. After an intense contest, Abdullah became victorious, defeating Abbas Khan with a close score of 3:2. The young participants displayed enthusiasm and determination, expressing their commitment to excel in the sport of squash with continued dedication and hard work, aiming to bring glory to their nation on the international stage.



FAISALABAD: Volleyball match played between Lahore and Faisalabad women teams, 34th Provincial Volleyball League matches under PM Youth Talent Hunt Programme organized by Government College Women University Faisalabad(GCWUF)at Crescent Sports Complex.

Rain frustrates England bid for fourth Test win against Australia

MANCHESTER (AFP/APP): England were left waiting on the rain as their push for an Ashes series-leveling win against Australia in the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Saturday was delayed by bad weather. This is a must-win match for England, currently 2-1 down with two to play, if they are to regain the Ashes.

They headed into the fourth day of five in a commanding position with Australia 113-4 in their second innings, still 162 runs behind England's imposing first-innings 592.

England are effectively six wickets away from a win that would square

the series at 2-2 heading into next week's fifth Test at The Oval in London. But persistent rain was still pelting down on Old Trafford, with the pitch and square fully covered, when play should have resumed at the scheduled start time of 11:00 am (1000 GMT).

There are now fears that rain on both Saturday and Sunday could scupper England's bid to draw level, with Old Trafford notorious for weather interruptions -- the Manchester ground has had 24 complete days rained off in Test cricket, plus an additional two entire Tests

abandoned.

England restricted world Test champions Australia to 317 in their first innings at Old Trafford, with Chris Woakes taking 5-52.

Then, scoring rapidly, England passed 500 in a home Ashes innings for the first time since their 1985 series win over Australia.

Opening batsman Zak Crawley's 189 laid the foundation in an innings where six of England's top seven all made fifties, with Jonny Bairstow left stranded on 99 not out when last man James Anderson was lbw on his Lancashire home ground.

Hungarian Grand Prix Hamilton beats Max Verstappen to take his first pole since 2021

Lewis Hamilton beat Max Verstappen in Hungarian Grand Prix qualifying to take his first pole position since the penultimate race of the 2021 season.

Hamilton snatched pole position from the world champion by just 0.003 seconds with the very final lap of the session.

Lando Norris led team-mate Oscar Piastri to an all-McLaren second row. Alfa Romeo's Zhou Guanyu impressed with fifth place on the grid ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Verstappen's team-mate Sergio Perez made it into the top 10 on the grid for the first time in six races but it will do little to release the pressure on the Mexican as he was ninth and 0.433secs slower than the Dutchman.

Zhou's team-mate Valtteri Bottas was seventh fastest, ahead of Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, whose eighth place seemed to confirm his team's relative slump in recent races in the face of car upgrades from their main rivals. Haas' Nico Hulkenberg was the final man in the top 10, while Daniel Ricciardo managed 13th place on his return to Formula 1 with Alpha Tauri, out-qualifying team-mate Yuki Tsunoda at the first attempt.

There were contrasting fortunes for Hamilton's Mercedes' team-mate George Russell, who will start 18th after being hampered by traffic immediately before his final run in Q1. Verstappen looked on course for yet another pole - he had won it at the past six races in a row - when he went fastest on his first run in the final part of qualifying. But Hamilton was only 0.126secs adrift on his own first run and looked like he might be able to challenge if he nailed his last lap and Verstappen did not quite.

Verstappen failed to improve on his final run - he was 0.02secs down on his own time - and Hamilton



nailed his on a track he has made his own with eight victories in his career.

Hamilton, who has had a difficult time with his team since the advent of new regulations in 2022, said: "It's been a crazy year and a half. I have lost my voice from shouting so much in the car. "We have been pushing so hard to finally get a pole and it just feels like the first time.

"I didn't expect to be fighting for pole so when I went into that final run I gave it everything.

"It has been massively challenging for everyone in the team. We have been focusing so much on trying to improve. "We have been losing so much time in Turns Four and 11 compared to the others, so I just sent it. It has been so tough and it is going to continue to be tough after this, but this just shows we can do it."

Verstappen, for his part, said he believed the upgrades Red Bull have introduced for this weekend had worked but that he had been struggling for balance and that he believed

Tour de France 2023 Tadej Pogacar salvages pride by winning stage 20

PARIS (AGENCIES): Tadej Pogacar salvaged some pride by taking stage 20 of this year's Tour de France as Jonas Vingegaard all but sealed the defence of his title. Pogacar has been unable to challenge Vingegaard's supremacy in the past week, but sprinted past the Dane to win on the final day of competitive racing. Vingegaard holds a lead of seven minutes and 29 seconds ahead of Sunday's procession into Paris.

Britain's Adam Yates is third overall, one place ahead of twin brother Simon. Stage 20 - as it happened. They were both involved in a thrilling race for the line at Le Markstein, with Adam leading out Pogacar and eventually finishing fourth, with Simon fifth. "Today I finally feel like myself again," said



Pogacar, who reduced Vingegaard's lead by six seconds because of the time bonus he received for the stage win.

"It was just really good from start to finish, to feel good again after many days suffering and to pull it off in the finish, I'm just super, super happy. "Adam did a shining fourth, with Simon fifth. "Today I finally feel like myself again," said

good. I know him now well. "He led me out really good and thanks to him it was a bit easier to prepare for the final, less nervous and I'm super happy the team did such a great job once again." Adam Yates said: "For me personally third (overall) is the best result I've ever had in a Grand Tour, so obviously I'm pretty happy.

"We're a little bit dis-

appointed as our goal was to get yellow but in the end there was only one guy better than us." France's Thibaut Pinot, riding his last Tour at the age of 33, had launched a solo attack with 30km to go, and was roared on by a huge crowd on his home roads as he went for an emotional farewell victory.

But he was caught and overhauled by Vingegaard, Pogacar and Felix Gall on the final climb, with the Yates brothers joining them for the sprint finish. Vingegaard attempted to spring clear with 300m to go, but he was expertly tracked by Pogacar and sat up once he knew his hopes of taking the stage win were over, allowing Gall to pass him before the line.



In brief

ANF seizes 58 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force in its ongoing operations against drug-peddlers on Saturday, arrested five accused from different areas of the country and recovered 58 kg of drugs from their possession. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation on M-1 Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, ANF recovered 32.4 kg hashish and 3.6 kg opium concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle. An accused, resident of Nowshera was also arrested. In two different operations at Sialkot International Airport, two suspects, residents of Haripur and Chakwal, who were going to Sharjah on flight no PK-209, were arrested. ANF recovered 198 heroin and Ice-filled capsules filled from their possession. In the fourth operation conducted in Dastagir Block 9, Karachi, 18 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Karachi. In the fifth operation, three kg of ice concealed in UPS was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Peshawar arrested near GT Road Peshawar. The recovered Ice drug was being smuggled to Punjab. Separate cases had been registered against all the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act while further investigations were in process, he added.

IRSA releases 422,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 422,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 527,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1523.89 feet and was 125.89 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 297,300 cusecs and 239,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1213.20 feet, which was 163.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,400 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 289,200, 203,800, 152,000 and 91,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 65,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 99,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

RPO, CPO review security arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Syed Khurram Ali and City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani along with Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Hassan Waqar Cheema visited areas of Taxila and Gujjar Khan. During the visit, the officers conducted a thorough review of the security arrangements and measures regarding Muharram ul Haram. They also inspected the procession routes in Taxila and Gujarkhan and also met with the procession management. RPO and CPO issued directives to the relevant officers regarding security arrangements. They emphasized the importance of implementing a foolproof security plan and adhering to the code of conduct and Standard Operating Procedure SOPs during Muharram. RPO Syed Khurram Ali underscored the need for effective security measures during Muharram. He assured that comprehensive security measures are being put in place to ensure the safety of the processions and gatherings.



ISLAMABAD: British Director Development Programme called on Federal Secretary Health Ifikhar Shalwani in his office.

Country's economy needs political stability, says Senator Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Irfan-Ul-Haque Siddique has said that economic stability was among the challenges faced by Pakistan which required political steadiness and continuation of economic policies. During a discussion with leaders of Pakistani community at Pakistan Embassy, Washington DC, the PML-N stalwart and senator maintained that unreliability and disruption in the policies could prove fatal for the economy.

Irfan Siddique said that it was a matter of satisfaction that the political leadership, institutions and other stakeholders of the country were very well cognizant that the past mistakes should not be repeated. He opined that the PML-N leadership had put the country on the path of progress, the growth rate increased to over 6 percent, and eliminated the scourge

of terrorism, but the incidents of 2017 had inflicted huge damage to that journey of progress and prosperity, a press release on Saturday said.

The senator further said that May 9 incidents had hurt the sentiments of every patriotic Pakistani, adding vandalism at installations of armed forces and disrespect to Shuhada of the country, who had sacrificed their lives for the motherland, were unacceptable to all Pakistanis.

He observed that throughout civilized societies, the miscreants were being made to face the law of the land, but now attempts were being made by raising human rights issues and creating hurdles in the legal way of bringing these elements involved in the abhorrent 9th May incidents to accountability.

In this regard, different resources were being used abroad, he added.

The delegation included prominent business leaders and community leaders including Mussadiq Chughtai, Muhammad Khushagi, Senator Akbar Khawaja, Dr Javid Manzoor and Kashmir leader and Advisor to President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Zareef.

Senator Siddique further said that the history of the two major political parties of the country was full of strenuous efforts, ordeals, and sacrifices, adding that the leadership of these parties preferred to sacrifice their lives and accepted exiles but never had been a part of any conspiracy against the country and its institutions by brainwashing the people to damage the national solidarity and prestige. Lauding the role of the overseas Pakistanis in their country, he said that they were well aware and wanted stability and economic uplift of Pakistan.

12k motorcyclists fined, 864 motorbikes impounded during police crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) in a crackdown against dangerous driving practices, particularly one-wheeling, reckless driving, riding heavy bikes without silencers, and creating traffic disruptions on Saturday, fined 12,000 motorcyclists and impounded 864 motorbikes. Under the leadership of Chief Traffic Officer Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer, the crackdown has been initiated which aims to ensure road safety and protect citizens' lives and property.

During the ongoing month, a police spokesperson said, "Traffic police have taken stringent actions, resulting in over 12,000 traffic tickets issued to motorcyclists involved in various violations. Furthermore, more than 864 motorbikes have been impounded at various police stations as a consequence of their involvement in dangerous activities." Following directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, special squads on major roads and important highways are performing duties to implement traffic laws effectively."

Accelerating work on Govt Associate College for Girls Gujar Khan directed

RAWALPINDI (INP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha has directed the department concerned to accelerated development work on Government Associate College for Girls Gujar Khan which is suffering from slowness.

He issued the directives while presiding over the review meeting held here on Saturday regarding development schemes.

The scheme of installation of 56 LED lights by the district council and the boundary wall work of 05 graveyards is also in progress. Road sector briefed that the release funds for the repair and maintenance of the 29.80 km long link road from Gujjar Khan to Peer Phalai in Union Council Kontrella and the widening of Suhawa Chakwal Road have been utilized fully and a demand for additional funds has been sent.

Code of conduct prepared for peace, intersect harmony during Muharram: CII

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) at its meeting chaired by Qibla Ayaz in Islamabad on Saturday unanimously prepared a code of conduct for peace and intersect harmony during the holy month of Muharram.

Sharing main points of the code of conduct at a news conference in Islamabad, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Qibla Ayaz said no individual should indulge in sectarian hatred, armed sectarian conflict or forcefully imposing his ideology on others saying this is contrary to the spirit of Shariat and it is Fassad Fil Ard. Qibla Ayaz said that according to the code of conduct, no public or private religious and educational institution should involve itself in inciting violence and extremism, and that strict action will be initiated against those involved in such acts including that of sectarianism.

The code of conduct recognized the right of all schools of thought of Islam to preach their beliefs but stressed that

nobody is allowed to spread hatred or hurl baseless allegations against any sect, individual or institution.

The code of conduct emphasized the duty to respect the sanctity of last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), all other Prophets, Companions of the Holy Prophet, Caliphs, wives of the Holy Prophet and Ahl-e-Bayt.

Qibla Ayaz said it is responsibility of all religious scholars and people belonging to other segments of the society to fully support state and state institutions especially the armed forces and law enforcement agencies for peace and stability in the country. He said the people should refrain from becoming part of any anti-state movement and that the state should act sternly against such elements. The code of conduct further emphasized upon the citizens to accept the supremacy of the constitution and ensure sanctity of the state. It said that the individuals should fulfill their allegiance of loyalty with the state.

GPEI delegation concludes visit to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) concluded its visit to Pakistan.

The delegation including the Polio Oversight Board, visited Pakistan to discuss the impact of political transition on eradication efforts and the strategies in place to vaccinate children that remain unreached in the polio-endemic districts of southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Led by Dr Chris Elias, Chair of the Polio Oversight Board and President Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the delegation included WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region Dr Ahmad Al-Mandhari, UNICEF South Asia's Deputy Regional Director Noala Skinner, CDC's

Polio Eradication Branch Chief Dr Omotayo Bolu, Chief Programme Strategy Officer from Gavi-the Vaccine Alliance, Aurelia Nguyen, Trustee of Rotary International Foundation Aziz Memon, and High Commissioner of Canada in Pakistan Leslie Scanlon, who represented all donors to the GPEI. This was the first visit by the POB and representatives from all GPEI partners to Pakistan in 2023. The POB is the highest decision-making and oversight body of the GPEI.

During the four-day visit from July 16-20 that included Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad, the delegates visited the National and Provincial Emergency Operations Centers, attended a meeting of the National Task Force on Polio Eradication, and held

separate meetings with the leadership of Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel.

"Pakistan continues to make important progress in the fight to eradicate polio. I'm impressed by the commitment I've seen again this week from the federal and provincial governments in getting the job done," said POB Chair Dr Chris Elias. "The experience globally is that strong government leadership is key in the final push to defeat polio." The delegation also met the governor of Punjab, the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and provincial chief secretaries, health secretaries, commissioners and deputy commissioners of priority districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Lahore and Peshawar, respectively, and met with the chief secretary of Balochistan.

Police action against rash PSV drivers underway

ISLAMABAD (APP): The crackdown of Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) is underway against drivers of heavy/PSV (Public Service Vehicles) operating in a dangerous manner.

During the current month, more than 1,000 traffic tickets have been issued, and over 270 vehicles have been impounded at various police stations.

"We, together, will ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property. There will be no leniency in taking strict legal action against drivers who endanger the lives and property of civilians," said Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer, Chief Traffic Officer of Islamabad. "On the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, a decision has been made to take further strict legal actions against PSV vehicles that violate traffic laws, especially heavy public service vehicles operating in dangerous manner. During the current month, more than 1,000 vehicles have been issued traffic tickets, and over 270

vehicles have been impounded in various police stations for violating traffic laws and endangering the lives and property of citizens."

"These drivers who repeatedly violate traffic laws and have their vehicles impounded will have their route permits canceled," he informed.

"To ensure the effective implementation of this legal action, the specially formed Special Squad by Islamabad Capital Police will be further strengthened with additional instructions." "The squad is responsible for carrying out operations on various highways and intersections in Islamabad, taking legal action against PSV vehicles violating traffic laws, and also taking strict actions against vehicles operating without fitness certificates." Chief Traffic Officer said, "He is closely monitoring this special initiative. Citizens can report complaints to the Islamabad Capital Police Help Line 15." "There will be no leniency in taking strict legal action against law-breakers concerning the safety of human lives," he emphasized.

Police arrested accused who tried to enter in red zone with weapon

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital police arrested the accused who allegedly tried to enter in the red zone with weapon.

Police team also recovered weapon with ammunition from his possession, a police public relation officer said. Following the special direction of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital police is always engaged to ensure the safety of life and property of the citizen.

Following these orders, Islamabad capital police have arrested the accused who tried to enter in the red zone with weapon. Police team also recovered weapon with ammunition from his possession. The accused was identified as Waqar Hussain. The accused was a resident of ParaChinar. Accused was shifted to Secretariat police station for further investigation. Islamabad Capital Police has tightened the checking around the Red Zone and the entry of motorcycles in the Red Zone is prohibited till 12 Muharram ul Haram. Citizens are requested to cooperate with police officials and should report any suspicious activity on "Pukar-15".

48th International Nathiagali Summer College concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr Masood Iqbal, Member Science, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) formally concluded the 48th 'International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs' at Nathiagali on Saturday.

In his speech as chief guest, Dr Masood Iqbal highlighted, "The continuity of holding this college for the last 48 years is due to the unwavering and dedicated efforts and support of the government, SPD, and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission."

He said, "Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission has consistently strived to promote both fundamental sciences and emerging technologies within Pakistan."

He emphasized, "For a nation to achieve genuine progress and prosperity, it must prioritize the acquisition and effective utilization of scientific advancements." He thanked the global experts and local participants for their valuable

contribution to the scientific discourse and exchange of knowledge on cutting-edge technologies during college. In the 48th INSC, a distinguished group of 30 experts from developed countries including the United States, United Kingdom, China, Russia, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Australia, Spain, Türkiye, Romania, and Chile delivered lectures on crucial topics throughout the event.

Whereas, out of a pool of over 1,200 applicants, approximately 250 researchers from universities and research organizations across Pakistan were carefully selected to participate in the college.

The idea of holding the International Nathiagali Summer College on Physics and Contemporary Needs came from the distinguished Nobel Laureate, Professor Abdus Salam who emphasized the vital need of communication for transferring and sharing scientific knowledge among the scientific community. PAEC has

been regularly organizing the college every year since 1976. The venue of the college is the famous tourist spot of Nathiagali, which attracts a large number of participants from across the world. The two-week International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) is an annual activity. This diverse gathering facilitates meaningful exchanges and fosters valuable connections among the participants, enriching the scientific community in Pakistan. There was also a poster session in which Wardah Mahmood from LUMS Lahore got first prize in Quantum Optics and Devices while Asra Jamil from the University of Karachi got first prize in the category of New Trends in High Energy Physics.

Moreover, Amara Nasir from PIEAS University won first prize in Semiconductor Materials and Devices activity, and Naseer Ahmed from PAEC took the lead in the activity of Advances in Plasma Physics and Allied Technologies.

Uncontrolled diabetes, fast food culture can lead to long-term complications

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts Saturday expressed their serious concern over the rising number of diabetic patients and warned that uncontrolled diabetes is the leading cause of heart attack, kidney failure, eye problems, feet injuries, and nerves related serious complications.

Talking to the PTV news channel, the experts said Pakistan is now ranked third in the prevalence of diabetes following China and India.

A senior medical specialist at PIMS Dr Sher Ali said that the number of diabetes patients in Pakistan is roughly more than 30 lacks which is alarming, adding, early diagnosis and timely interventions are crucial to prevent subsequent type 2 diabetes.

He said healthful eating is an important way of managing blood sugar levels, adding, a person with a new diagnosis of diabetes may have to reconsider their diet.

He added that highly processed foods like fast food that are high in calories and low in vitamins, minerals, and fiber break

down quickly in the body and can cause a rapid rise in blood sugar levels.

"There is an urgent need for reinvention of Pakistani cuisine, he demanded, adding, every unhealthy eating habit should be avoided, especially rice in the form of biryani, soft drinks, and the so-called fast food."

He said most people living with diabetes do not know of their health status and they only come to know about it when their eyes, kidneys, heart, or brain had suffered irreparable damage. The silent killer diabetes was consuming thousands of lives in Pakistan annually but unfortunately, the majority of people were unaware of the causes of the disease considering it a minor issue, he regretted. Lack of awareness regarding health issues was no less than a crime, as diseases like diabetes were causing irreversible damage to the people silently, he mentioned. He advised the public to change their dietary and recreational habits and get themselves tested for diabetes as soon as possible.



ISLAMABAD: The painter paints the metal railings of the pedestrian bridge with white paint at Islamabad Expressway.

Drug lab discovered

NANGARHAR (Agencies): A drugs lab was discovered on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. Three people have been arrested on charges smuggling of the drug. These people had placed nineteen kilograms of heroin in a car and wanted to smuggle it from Helmand to Nangarhar, when they were arrested yesterday on the highway, from the Mashali area. The detainees had skillfully placed drug packages in a car, Laghman Police Spokesman Mohammad Yunus said.

The Frontier Post

Muharram 04, 1445 — Sunday, July 23, 2023

Heavy weapons repaired

KABUL (Agencies): The country's National Defense Ministry says that their technical team repaired huge number of heavy weapons and vehicles. A spokesman, Mawlawi Waheedullah Mohammadi, for Khalid Bin Waleed Corps, said that heavy weapons includes 9 DC cannons, 3 anti-aircraft guns and 2 missile launchers. He says that special attention has been paid to this sector and efforts are being made to equip army with other light and heavy weapons.

IEA rejects Iran's claim Daesh leaders moved to Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has rejected Iran's claim that Daesh leaders have moved to Afghanistan from Iraq, Syria and Libya.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian recently told ISNA news agency: "It is not a secret to anyone that the leaders of Daesh and the trained forces of Daesh have moved from Iraq, Syria, parts of Libya to Afghanistan in recent months. This is one of the challenges facing the current ruling body and the

Taliban in Afghanistan."

IEA's Foreign Ministry in a statement on Friday said that the claim is not true as IEA's forces had a serious fight against Daesh both during the "occupation" and after that, as a result of which the group has lost its ability to cause destruction.

"If Iran has information about the movement of Daesh to Afghanistan, we hope it will share it so that the Afghan security forces can take necessary actions in this regard," the statement said.

The statement noted that Afghanistan does not have

a shared border with any of the mentioned Arab countries. "Instead of shifting the responsibility onto others, it is better that countries fulfill their international obligations in terms of securing their borders."

"The Islamic Emirate will not allow anyone to threaten Afghanistan's national security or our soil be used against others. Instead of making concerning remarks, Iranian authorities should focus on good economic, political and social relations between the two neighboring and friendly nations," the statement said.

Yaqoob blames US for IEA's lack of recognition



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Defense Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has fulfilled the conditions for recognition, but even so, most countries do not recognize it due to pressure by the United States.

In an interview with Saudi Arabia-based Al-Arabiya TV, Mujahid said that if countries have concerns, the Islamic Emirate is ready to talk to solve them. "We want countries, especially strong Islamic countries, to recognize our government," Mujahid said.

The Acting Minister of Defense said that the Islamic Emirate had no involvement in the issue of killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda in Kabul.

He also said that the Islamic Emirate has no relationship or cooperation with al-Qaeda.

Mujahid also called on the US to stop violating Afghanistan's airspace because the Islamic Emirate has pledged not to allow Afghanistan's territory to be used against another country.

He said that the Islamic Emirate has also asked Pakistan not to allow anyone to violate Afghanistan's airspace through its territory.

On Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Mujahid said that the group is not present in Afghanistan, nor is the Islamic Emirate funding it.

He said that Pakistan, with its claims on TTP, tries to show to the world that the Islamic Emirate does not adhere to its commitments.

In the interview, Mujahid also said that the Islamic Emirate does not want people who had friendship with the "occupiers" to work in the government, but they can live as ordinary citizens in Afghanistan.

Traffic accident kills three in Badghis

BADGHIS (Khaama Press): A traffic accident in the western province of Badghis killed three people, including a truck driver, according to a provincial official.

According to the statement, the deadly accident occurred at 8:00 a.m. local time when a fast-driven truck turtle was in the Band-e-Sabzak area outside of the provincial capital Qala-e-Naw.

A similar incident occurred in the eastern province of Nangarhar, killing two people on the spot. The incident occurred when a freight truck and motorcycle collided.

Three people were killed in a separate accident in the Badakhshan province district of Kofaeb earlier.

According to the officials, the current increase in road accidents is directly linked to reckless driving, dilapidated road, poorly maintained vehicles, and not following the traffic rules.

Over the past weeks, more than 33 people have died, and 45 others have been injured due to several traffic incidents in different parts of the country.

Finance Ministry revives 12 state-owned companies

KABUL (Agencies): Finance Ministry spokesperson Ahmad Wali Haqmal says from 44 state-owned companies that were inactive or partially active in the previous government, 12 of them have been fully reactivated.

Haqmal said that with the activation of these companies, employment has been provided for thousands of citizens in the country.

He added that efforts are underway to activate other state-owned companies in the future.

The ministry has stated that most of these activated companies are manufacturing firms.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance has said that the government does not have an allocated budget to activate the rest of the companies, but tries to reactivate some companies from their own assets and others in cooperation with the private sector.

EU sanctions on Islamic Emirate not beneficial to any side, says Mujahid

KABUL (TOLOnews): Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid reacted to the European Union's decision to sanction some leaders of the Islamic Emirate, saying that the move is "not beneficial to any side."

On Thursday, the European Council said that it imposed restrictive measures against 18 individuals and 5 entities under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, because of their responsibility for serious human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Ukraine and Russia.

"Six individuals were listed over various forms of sexual and gender-based violence," said the Council of the EU in a statement.

The "acting Taliban Ministers of Education and Justice and the acting

Taliban Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Afghanistan because of their role in depriving Afghan girls and women of their right to education, access to justice and equal treatment between men and women" are among these six individuals.

"These sanctions not only have a negative impact on the officials of Afghanistan but the Taliban should take serious actions to change the lives of the people of Afghanistan," said Wais Naseri, political analyst.

Mujahid called on the EU to use dialogue instead of pressure and sanctions.

"Instead of using pressure and sanctions, interaction, dialogue and understanding should be used. Repeating the failed experience against Afghans and imposing politics did not give results," he said on



Twitter...

A women's rights activist, Diva Patang, said that the restrictions have not benefited the Afghan women.

"The restrictions imposed by them repeatedly never benefited the women," said Diva Patang, women's rights activist.

Last March, the EU announced sanctions on nine individuals and three entities under its Global

Human Rights Sanctions Regime, including two acting "Taliban" ministers--Higher Education Minister Neda Mohammad Nadim and the Minister of Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice Mohammad Khalid Hanafi--for being "behind the decrees banning women from higher education and gender-segregated practices in public spaces."

Minister: Time will come for IEA to 'impose sanctions on others'

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Justice Abdul Hakeem Sharei said in response to being sanctioned by the European Union, that the time will come for the Islamic Emirate to impose sanctions on others.

Speaking at an event at Kabul University on Saturday, Sharei described the ruling system in Afghanistan as strong and unique.

"If you and I are united and stand by this regime, I assure you that if they impose sanctions on us today, the day will come when we will impose sanctions on them," Sharei stressed.

He said despite the US's defeat in Afghanistan, Washington has not stopped its enmity with Afghans, and the patrolling of American drones in Afghanistan's airspace has not stopped since the IEA's takeover.

According to him, the IEA has told the US representatives to Kabul that they have asked whether the

drones are "chasing Daesh or the leaders of the Islamic Emirate."

"When you [Americans] failed in Afghanistan, the drones did not stop for half an hour, so how can I be sure that you [US] are following our elders or Daesh?" asked Sharei.

"The second issue is that you have set a reward for our elders' heads, so how can I be sure that you are not after us or after them [Daesh]?"

Meanwhile, the Acting Minister of Higher Education Neda Mohammad Nadeem also said at the event that Afghanistan has achieved much in the field of science, and that work on the curriculum is one of these achievements.

According to him, all departments are functioning and services are being provided, "as the people deserve".

On Thursday, EU member states approved sanctions against three senior IEA officials over restric-



tions imposed on women and girls.

The EU blacklisted acting IEA Minister of Education, Habibullah Agha, for implementing the IEA policy of denying girls access to secondary education by extending the ban on female students participating in secondary education beyond the sixth grade.

The EU also imposed sanctions on acting Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani for having effectively used the legal system to implement gender-based repression against women by excluding female judges

from the Afghan court system and systematically restricting women's access to justice, the EU stated.

In addition, the EU also listed acting Minister of Justice Abdul Hakim Sharei, for effectively obstructed the licensing of female lawyers and women's ability to receive legal representation, and removed women from positions within the justice system.

Blacklisted individuals have their assets frozen and are prohibited from traveling to the 27-nation EU as well as transiting through Union territories.

Afghanistan exports pomegranate juice to US for first time: IEA

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said on Saturday that Afghanistan has for the first time exported pomegranate juice from Herat province to the US. "The first shipment of pomegranate juice from Pamir Cola factory was exported to America from Herat Province, Afghanistan," IEA's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid tweeted Saturday.

The company has been operating since 2018, and the company has exported its products to several countries, such as India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Germany.

Officials in Herat

province say that this shows the export opportunities that exist.

"It is known that with the arrival of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, exports have increased, and yesterday we saw that a shipment of pomegranate juice was exported to the United States through the port of Karachi, and this is an important step for the growth of Afghanistan's economy, and it shows that the capacity to increase exports to other countries is available," said Nisar Ahmad Elyas, a spokesman for the Herat governor.

Afghanistan is one of the largest producers of pome-



granates in the world, with an annual production of about 600,000 tons. Pomegranates are grown in 33 out of 34 provinces, with Kandahar, Helmand, Farah, Herat, and Balkh being the main producers.

According to a report by the US Agency for International Development, pomegranate juice can fetch up to \$4 per liter on the international market, compared to \$0.5 per kilogram for fresh pomegranates.

MoIC signs cooperation memorandum

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) announced the signing of a memorandum of cooperation with six foreign aid agencies.

The spokesman for the MoIC, Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, said that aid agencies will implement development projects for professional skills training and business development support for entrepreneurs.

"The program to support private entrepreneurs, support women weavers and artisans, local economic activities, and small and medium businesses will be implemented in the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Helmand, Farah, Jawzjan, Bamiyan, Samangan, Faryab, and

Badghis," said a spokesman for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy said the role of supporting institutions will be effective in reducing poverty and growing small business activities.

"The support of non-governmental organizations plays an effective role in the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and creates job opportunities, economic growth, and poverty reduction," said Abdul Rahman Habib, spokesman for the Ministry of Economy.

Meanwhile, economists said that the support of enterprises in the industry section is effective in increasing jobs and eco-

omic progress.

"If these projects are evaluated and planned in a basic and standard way if they are implemented, they can play an effective role in the growth of the country's economy," said Qutbuddin Yaqobi, an economist.

Based on figures of the Ministry of Economy, now 59 non-governmental organizations are active in the development of commercial activities and support of small and medium enterprises in the center and various provinces of the country, which cooperate in the areas of creating work opportunities for artisans, the economic empowerment of women and capacity building and professional training.

Central bank fails for return of frozen assets

KABUL (Khaama Press): A US-funded audit of Afghanistan's Taliban-run central bank failed to secure support from Washington for releasing bank assets from a \$3.5 billion Swiss trust fund, which would have helped the country's financial crisis, according to US officials.

An anonymous US Treasury official said that the audit had kept the department's position that the bank must implement changes before it accepts payments from the Afghan Fund to Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), Reuters reported.

The Afghan Fund, based in Switzerland, was established last year with the help of half of the \$7 billion in central bank funds that were frozen at the Federal Reserve Bank of

New York in August 2021 after the Taliban seized power.

Reuters reports that the audit, financed by USAID and carried out by an outside contractor, looked at DAB's DAB's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing measures and its banking monitoring and payments departments. The audit's final findings are still pending. Therefore, a more thorough evaluation is required.

"Da Afghanistan Bank must show that it is free from political influence and interference," a US Treasury official told Reuters, referring to the need to replace the three Taliban officials who oversee the bank with professional bankers who are not under US or UN sanctions. The official emphasized

that the Taliban must deploy a "reputable" impartial monitor and demonstrate their "adequate" measures against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Alternative education: Bamiyan girls set up a handicraft workshop

BAMIYAN (TOLOnews): More than 20 girls who have been deprived of education have set up a handicraft production workshop in Bamiyan at their own expense.

They said that providing for living expenses of their families and providing job opportunities for other girls who are deprived of education are among their goals.

"We wanted to gather those who stayed away from school and university; they had studied, but they did not learn a craft, they were sitting at home, and were very sad," said Masooma Mohammadi, a businesswoman.

"I was in the twelfth grade when I met Mrs. Amina, and she gave us the motivation to start this

work," said Salih Ali Zada, a businesswoman.

These girls say they are worried about the lack of a suitable place, the lack of facilities, and a market for selling their handicrafts, and they asked the current government officials and private institutions to cooperate in meeting their needs.

"We don't have the equipment, there are women who sew, but they don't have advanced tools, they don't have proper facilities, they are facing problems, they cannot do their work quickly," said Massona Nazari, a trader.

The head of information and culture of Bamiyan said women's handicraft products are important and announced the creation of exhibitions to market their



handicrafts in this province.

"We work for them in the field of marketing, if major exhibitions are held in Kabul, we will display the handicrafts of these female workers of Bamiyan province so that they can earn money," said Safiullah Zayed, head of the

Information and Culture department in Bamiyan.

According to the information of officials, hundreds of women in the center and districts of Bamiyan are engaged in the production of handicrafts, and in this way they provide for the living expenses of their families.

North Korea fires ‘several cruise missiles’ into sea

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea fired several cruise missiles toward the sea to the west of the Korean Peninsula, the South Korean military said. This would be North Korea's latest missile launch since it fired two ballistic missiles, as Pyongyang and Washington step up displays of military force in a standoff over the isolated country's nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

A number of cruise missiles launched were detected, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. North Korea fired missiles hours after a US nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) surfaced for a rare visit to South Korea.

North Korea also warned that deployment of US aircraft carriers, bombers or missile submarines in South Korea could meet criteria for its use of nuclear weapons. While adding to its barrage of missile launches in recent months, North Korea remained publicly silent for a fifth day on the fate of an American soldier who bolted into the North across the heavily armed Korean border this week. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were detected beginning around 4 a.m. but did not immediately report how many missiles were fired or how far they flew. It said the United States and South Korean militaries were closely analyzing the launches. North Korea in recent years has been testing newly developed cruise missiles it describes as "strategic," implying an intent to arm them with nuclear weapons. Experts say the main mission of those weapons would include striking naval assets and ports. Designed to fly like small airplanes and travel along landscape that would make them harder to detect by radar, cruise missiles are among a growing collection of North Korean weapons aimed at overwhelming missile defenses in the South.

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. They flew about 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in waters east of the Korean Peninsula. The flight distance of those missiles roughly matched the distance between Pyongyang and the South Korean port city of Busan, where the USS Kentucky made the first visit by a US nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s.

Also, American soldier Pvt. Travis King sprinted across the border into North Korea while on a tour of an inter-Korean truce village. North Korea's state media has yet to comment on King and the country has not responded to US requests to

clarify where he is being kept and what his condition is. US officials have expressed concern about King's well-being, considering North Korea's previous rough treatment of some American detainees. It could be weeks, or even months, before North Korea releases meaningful information about King, analysts say, as the country could drag out his detention to maximize leverage and add urgency to US efforts to secure his release.

Some experts say the North may try to use King for propaganda or as a bargaining chip to coax political and security concessions from Washington, possibly tying his release with the United States cutting back its military activities with South Korea. "With so many moving pieces, it's important not to attribute causation to mere correlation of events. But North Korea's missile provocations do not overshadow an easy negotiation to secure Travis King's release," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at South Korea's Ewha University. "Unauthorized border crossings endanger personnel, risk a political and even military incident, and can be exploited by North Korean hostage diplomacy."

The United States and South Korea have been expanding their combined military exercises and have agreed to increase the regional deployment of US strategic assets like bombers, aircraft carriers and submarines in a show of force against North Korea, which has test-fired around 100 missiles since the start of 2022. The allies also kicked off new rounds of nuclear contingency planning meetings that are partially aimed at easing fears among the South Korean public about the North's growing nuclear threat and suppressing voices within the country that it should pursue its own deterrent.

North Korea's defense minister issued a veiled threat suggesting the docking of the Kentucky in South Korea could be grounds for a nuclear attack by the North. North Korea has used such rhetoric before, but the comments underscored how much relations are strained now. South Korea's Defense Ministry described the deployment of the Kentucky and the nuclear contingency planning meetings between Washington and Seoul as "defensive response measures" to counter the North Korean threat. The ministry said in a statement it "strongly warns" that any nuclear attack by the North on the allies would face an "immediate, overwhelming and decisive response ... that would bring an end to the North Korean regime."

Heavy rain lashes Lahore, other Punjab cities

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Heavy rains hit several Punjab cities, including Lahore, on Saturday, affecting business and social life. Rain was also reported in Bhakkar, Kasur, Nankana Sahib, Okara, and adjacent areas where it has turned the weather pleasant and brought the mercury considerably down in these areas.

In Lahore, light-to-heavy rain continues in different areas including Abbot Road, Davis Road, Lakshmi Chowk, Mall Road, Shimla Pahari, Data Darbar, Gulshan Ravi, Johar Town, Gulberg, Samanabad, Baghbanpura, Garhi Shahu and Burki. The highest rainfall of 173 millimeters was recorded in Gulshan-e-Ravi, with eight areas of Lahore, including Lakshmi Chowk, Nisthar Town and Qurtaba Chowk, receiving above 100mm rain so far.

It was recorded 88mm at Jail Road, 84mm at airport, 87mm in Gulberg, 95mm at Upper Mall while Pani Wala Talab recorded 141mm rainfall. The rain however caused water accumulation on various roads, disrupting traffic flow. It has also inundated low-lying areas in Lahore, Kasur and other cities with power outage in several areas.

‘Pak-US Economic Alliance to draw two countries together’

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee Michael McCaul has said that economic alliance between United States and Pakistan would bring the two countries closer to each other.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States is responsible for oversight and legislative developments affecting foreign policy; strategic planning and agreements; arms control and disarmament issues; the United States Agency for International Development; the Foreign Assistance Act; public diplomacy, including international communication, information policy, international education, and cultural pro-

grams; and other important matters. "I think the more trade and economic investment we can have together, the closer the ties between our two nations", he said.

"We have a security alliance, a security partnership, but we also need to have an economic alliance and that would draw our two countries together." "You don't choose your neighbors but you can choose your friend. We always want Pakistan and United States to be friends." Talking to a media person after attending BBQ Reception and Mango Festival, hosted by Ambassador Masood Khan at the Embassy of Pakistan, Congressman McCaul said that Pakistan is located in a difficult part of the world. Referring to Afghanistan, the issue of

refugees and the menace of terrorism, he said that "it is in our best interests to have a strong alliance and be strong partners with Pakistan."

Talking about the quality and the taste of Pakistani mangoes, Congressman McCaul said that Pakistani mangoes were the finest, the best. "The hospitality is fantastic," he added. Later, Ambassador Masood Khan also had a meeting with Chairman Michael McCaul at the Embassy.

"It was a pleasure to receive Honorable Michael McCaul @RepMcCaul, Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee, at Pakistan Embassy. Discussed ways to strengthen Pak-US ties. Wish him more success!" tweeted the Ambassador.

Govt decides to increase power tariff

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government struck the inflation-ridden masses with a powerful jolt, as it decided to exorbitantly raise the power tariff in the middle of the night.

The electricity price has been hiked by Rs7.50 per unit. The basic tariff has been increased from Rs3 to Rs7.50 per unit. The federal cabinet approved the summary for this massive price hike through circulation.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority has already approved an increase in electricity tariff for the current financial year. The federal government has filed a request with Nepra for an increase in the basic price. The authority will now make a decision after conducting a hearing on the federal government's request.

After Nepra's decision, the federal government will issue a notification for the increase. The price hike has been proposed to be implemented from July 1. The price increase proposed for the consumers utilizing 100 units of electricity is Rs3 per unit. For those using 101 to 200 units, electricity will cost Rs4 per unit after the proposal is accepted. For the electricity consumers using 201 to 300 units, the proposed price hike is Rs5 per unit. The electricity consumers using 301 to 400 units, it is proposed to increase the cost by Rs6.50 per unit. Moreover, the government has proposed an increase of Rs7 per unit for the consumers utilizing 400 to 700 units.

Iran deports 59 illegal Pakistanis

CHAGAI (INP): Iranian border officials on Saturday deported another 59 Pakistani nationals who had illegally entered in the country. Pakistan's border authorities said that citizens deported from Iran have been handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency's anti-human trafficking cell for investigation.

"The deportees were intending to illegally emigrate to European countries via Iran," border officials said. People from Pakistan used to cross into Iran hoping to illegally emigrate to Europe in search of greener pastures. The issue of illegal immigrants has been highlighted on global level with recent boat sinking incident in Mediterranean Sea near the coast of Greece, in which several Pakistani nationals were reported dead or missing.

At least 78 people were drowned when the ill-fated boat with reportedly 400 to 750 people onboard sank in the Mediterranean Sea near the Greek coast. Following the incident, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) swung into action and arrested several human traffickers associated with the incident.

Moonis declared absconder

LAHORE (PPI): Moonis Elahi, the son of PTI President Parvez Elahi, was declared an absconder on Saturday in the money laundering case he has been nominated in after he fled the country. Moonis is currently living in Spain.

Last month, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had lodged a case against Elahi and his son over alleged money laundering in the Panama scandal which had revealed the businesses. They are accused of concealing billions of rupees in five Panamanian firms. Elahi allegedly purchased companies in Panama and there was an evidence of illegal transfer of money abroad, according to FIA sources.

On Saturday, a local court in the provincial capital not only declared him an absconder – as he failed to appear in person despite multiple notices issued – but also his travel history and the details of bank accounts while adjourning the proceedings till next hearing. As part of being declared an absconder, the court started the process to freeze his assets, computerized national identity card, passport and bank accounts.

On the other hand, Moonis was declared a fugitive in another two case related to the Anti-Corruption Establishment in which he is accused of receiving bribes along with his father and Muhammad Khan Bhatti – the former principal secretary to the chief minister.



BAGHDAD: Iraqi people holding a protest against desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.

Iraqis protest again after purported Holy Quran desecration

BAGHDAD (Agencies): Iraqi security forces on Saturday dispersed about 1,000 supporters of Shia Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr who tried to march to Baghdad's Green Zone housing foreign embassies, believing a Holy Quran had been desecrated in Denmark.

The protesters were reacting to reports of an apparent desecration of the Muslim holy book for the third time in a month, with the first two in Sweden already raising diplomatic tensions. "I can also confirm there was a book burnt. We do not know which book it was," she said. "It was quite peaceful." Sadr, who has a following of millions among the country's majority Shia population and wields great influence over national politics, has urged action after Holy Quran desecrations in Sweden.

His followers on Saturday reacted to the news from Copenhagen, and gathered in the pre-dawn darkness at Tahrir Square in central Baghdad, some carrying portraits of Sadr. "Yes, yes to the Quran!" shouted the protesters, mostly young men. Security forces cut two bridges leading to the high-security Green Zone where governmental institutions and foreign embassies are located. The demonstrators tried to force their way through before officers pushed them back.

The protesters eventually dispersed several hours later, after scuffles erupted, an interior ministry official told AFP, speaking anonymously because he was not allowed to brief the media. Protesters were trying to reach the embassy of Denmark, the official said. Early Saturday, Iraq's foreign ministry had condemned "the desecration of the Holy Quran and the Iraqi flag in front of the embassy of Iraq in Denmark". The ministry's statement said that "these actions provoke reactions and put all the parties in delicate situations". A separate statement said "we cannot allow to happen again" what occurred at the Swedish embassy. It reaffirmed Baghdad's "full commitment" to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and said it guarantees "the protection and security provided to diplomatic teams".

Following the Copenhagen incident, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani on Saturday said: "The Danish government is responsible for preventing insults to the Holy Koran and Islamic sanctities, as well as prosecuting and punishing those who insult them... the Islamic world is waiting for the practical action of the Danish government. Separately, hundreds of Sadr supporters were behind the storming

and burning of Sweden's embassy in Iraq's Baghdad on early Thursday, over another planned desecration of the Muslim holy book in Sweden, weeks after the same protester there desecrated the Holy Quran.

Iraq had condemned the attack on Sweden's embassy but expelled Stockholm's ambassador. Later, Sweden said it had temporarily moved its seconded embassy staff and operations from Baghdad to Sweden for safety reasons. Sadr supporters had rallied by their hundreds in Baghdad's Sadr City after Friday prayers, chanting support for the Holy Quran. The chameleon-like figure, who has made several reversals of position over the years, in April had said he was "freezing" his movement for a year, though the decision would not affect religious activities. Last August, he said he was retiring from politics.

The actions of Sweden-based Iraqi refugee Salwan Momika had triggered condemnation across the Muslim world. Protests also erupted in Tehran and Lebanon. The United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, summoned Sweden's charge d'affaires on Friday to protest "the repeated attacks and abuses on copies of the Holy Quran committed by extremists" in Sweden, the foreign ministry in Abu Dhabi said. Iran said late Friday it will not allow a new Swedish ambassador into the country and its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a statement on Saturday called Momika's protest in Sweden "dangerous".

"The severest punishment for the perpetrator of this crime is what all Islamic scholars agree upon," Khamenei added, calling for Momika to stand trial in an Islamic country. Pakistan had also condemned the "despicable act" after the first sacrilegious act was carried out towards the end of June. A series of rallies were also organised in Rawalpindi and Islamabad by political and religious parties, traders, journalists and members of civil society on July 7 to condemn the desecration.

Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom called Momika's protest "a clear provocation" that "in no way reflects the Swedish government's opinions", while also stressing a "constitutional right to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom to demonstrate". Meanwhile, there is limited political will in Sweden to ban Holy Quran desecrations that have upset large parts of the Muslim world, including Pakistan, and it would be complicated to do even if there were backing for such a move, experts and politicians

had said on Friday.

Sweden's laws, current politics and social traditions mean such incidents are unlikely to be halted any time soon. Swedish courts have ruled that police cannot stop the desecration of holy scriptures. While the two latest Holy Quran desecrations could be tested in court for inciting hate, it is widely believed the act is protected by the constitution's far-reaching freedom of speech laws.

To change the constitution is a lengthy process that requires a vote in parliament, then a general election, and then another vote in parliament. Even so, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson's government said last week it would examine if there was reason to change the Public Order Act to make it possible for police to stop Holy Quran desecrations, amid concerns over national security.

The issue of Holy Quran desecrations has potentially jeopardised Sweden's accession to Nato. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has previously warned that Sweden would not be accepted into the military alliance if Holy Quran desecrations took place there. Turkiye, alongside Hungary, has so far held up Sweden's bid — launched in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine — although Erdogan said earlier this month that he would send the Nordic country's Nato application to parliament. The 57-nation OIC introduced a resolution that passed in the United Nations Human Rights Council on July 12 calling for states to review their laws that prevent prosecution of "religious hatred".

Deputy Prime Minister Ebba Busch of the Christian Democrats said earlier this month the Sweden alone determined its legislation and would not be influenced by other countries' faiths or laws. "Sweden does not bend its back to Islamism. Burning scriptures is reprehensible but not illegal," she tweeted on July 7 after a Holy Quran desecration outside a Stockholm mosque. Any potential law change that would make such acts illegal is also highly unlikely to pass because the minority government is dependent on the support of the Sweden Democrats, the second biggest party in parliament after last year's elections, which is anti-immigrant and critical of Islam.

"The Sweden Democrats have not considered introducing any such law in Sweden, nor do we intend to support any such legislation if put forward in parliament," Sweden Democrat Party Secretary Richard Jomshof told Reuters in an emailed statement.

‘In-time elections as only way to ensure stability’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Saturday termed in-time elections as the only way to ensure political stability in the country.

Addressing a news conference here, Faisal Kundi said that Pakistan People's Party had a very clear stance that assemblies should complete their tenure and the caretaker government and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should conduct elections within 60 days. The SAPM said, "60 days are enough for an election campaign, however, if coalition political parties want 90 days for the campaign, PPP is ready for that."

Commenting on the reservations of political parties including PPP over conducting elections on the basis of the new census, he said, "It is better to conduct elections on the previous census." About the Sindh government's rehabilitation efforts for the flood-affected people in the province, Faisal Kundi said that the Sindh government had fulfilled its promise of providing houses to those families affected due to floods.

"The Sindh government has provided land rights to 5,000 flood-affected fami-

lies in the province. The funds for the construction of 50,000 houses have been released so far." The SAPM said, "The provincial government will provide a total of 2,00,000 to the women head of family."

He said although the flood had affected many parts of the country, the way the Sindh government had responded to this calamity in terms of providing relief to those affected was exemplary. "The PPP government will replicate the same model of providing houses to its people in the other provinces too in the future", he said.

About the cipher issue, Faisal Kundi said that the former Principal Secretary of the former Prime Minister, Azam Khan had exposed all the false claims related to the cipher. "The whole country was handed over to a person who could not retain a piece of paper (cipher)", he said.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi said, "PPP is not against any political party but those involved in the May 09 violence should be taken to task." He said that the incident of May 09 would not happen if those involved in the attack on PTV in the past were punished. Faisal Kundi said, "Foreign minister,

Bilawal Bhutto has pursued effective diplomatic policies which helped revive and strengthen relations between Pakistan and other countries."

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi said that the coalition government had faced enormous economic challenges but succeeded in steering the country out of the crisis due to its prudent policies.

About the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), the federal minister highlighted that the first-ever dynamic National Socio-Economic Survey was being carried out successfully across the country. "Under the Benazir Kafaalat program, around Rs 72 billion have been disbursed among eight million families," he informed. Responding to a question, Faisal Kundi said, "PPP has always emphasized on ensuring the rule of law and conveyed to all the political parties that elections should be conducted within 60 days." To another question, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi said, "No patriotic citizen can justify what happened on May 09 and those involved in it should be dealt with strictly."

‘PDM govt’s show will end in next two weeks’

RAWALPINDI (INP): Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, the leader of Awami Muslim League and former federal interior minister has stated the ongoing puppet show of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif led PDM government would end in next two weeks.

He told on Twitter that approximately two weeks of their term remain but the government is trying male unlawful legislations without any fear. According to him, in a house of 342 members, only 12 legislators have managed to pass more than 100 bills, setting a world record recognized by the Guinness Book.

He pointed out that an assembly session requires a minimum of 86 members, but the lack of respect within the assembly makes it evident that only one speaker is sufficient. He claimed that the rapid passage of 100 bills in the last session was a meticulously planned move. The former federal minister criticized the bills, alleging that they were filled with disinformation and misinformation, ultimately leading to the restriction of press freedom. He condemned the government's actions as an attempt to strangle media freedom, symbolizing the "funeral of freedom of the press" held with great fanfare.